# EMERSON

## HOW TO KNOW HIM

SAMUEL McCHORD CROTHERS

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# RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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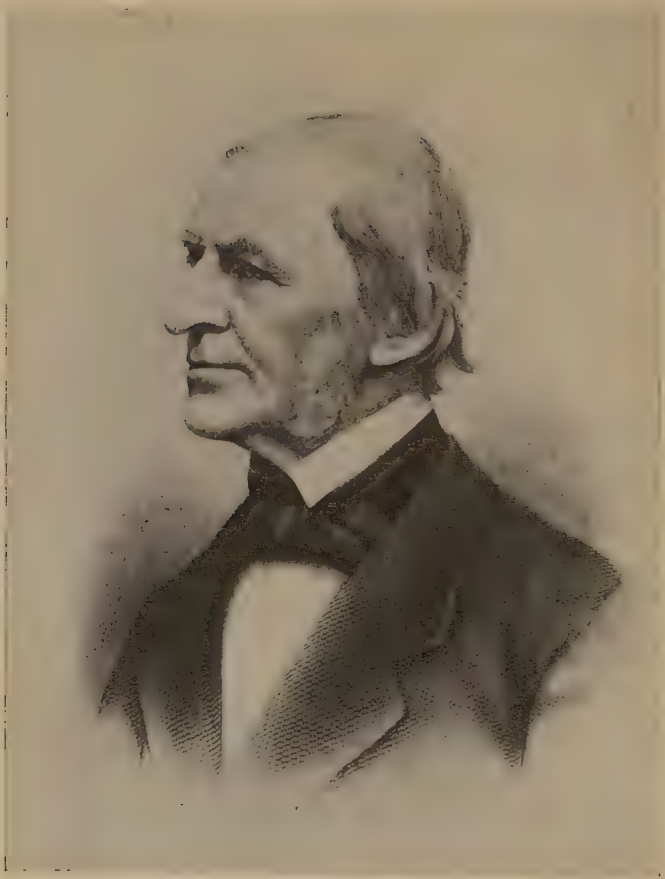

R. W. Emerson

# Ralph Waldo Emerson

## HOW TO KNOW HIM

*By*

Samuel McChord Crothers

*Author of*

THE GENTLE READER, THE PARDONER'S WALLET
OLIVER WENDEL HOLMES AND HIS FELLOW BOARDERS
ETC., ETC.

*WITH PORTRAIT*

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1921 c.

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# INTRODUCTORY

The mind of Emerson was a searchlight revealing not itself but the various objects on which it successively turned. An intense and narrow beam of light would shoot through the darkness and reveal some object. Then it would pick up another object which would have its brief moment of visibility. The landscape was never revealed in any one view.

The only way to know Emerson is to join him in his intellectual exercises. In spite of his personal aloofness I know of no one with whom we can more readily come to a feeling of intellectual intimacy. He had no pretensions and no reserves. In clear sentences he told us what from time to time he thought. He made no attempt to connect these thoughts into a coherent system. For any one else to attempt to do this would be to misrepresent him.

In the short chapters which follow I have

treated Emerson as a contemporary rather than as a writer of the last generation. His thought is as pertinent to the twentieth century as to the nineteenth. Indeed I think that in many respects we may be nearer to him than were those who first listened to him. The prejudices which he encountered have largely died away. The problems over which he was meditating remain.

I wish to make grateful acknowledgment to Houghton Mifflin Company for special permission to make extracts from their authorized and copyright editions of Emerson's works. Also to Doctor Edward Emerson for the use of his edition of his father's journals. S. M. C.

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# RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The book is not simply a reflection of Emerson in the mind of Crothers. He gets to the heart of the Concord Sage, acquaints the reader with him, meets the promise of the book's title, draws freely from fresh sources of information, quotes liberally from the philosopher's utterances; shows him an American, not a Victorian; as belonging to the little company of emancipators which includes Bergson and William James; as a lover of wisdom, in the ancient sense, akin to Job, his genius timeless, his mind free of the universe.

# EMERSON

## CHAPTER I

### THE APPROACH TO EMERSON

*"But, critic, spare thy vanity,*
*Nor show thy pompous parts,*
*To vex with odious subtlety*
*The cheerer of men's hearts."*

SO Emerson writes of the Persian poet Saadi who "sat in the sun" and with smiling lips uttered his thoughts to whosoever chose to listen. He had nothing to prove, nothing to apologize for, nothing to lament.

"Denounce who will, who will deny,
And pile the hills to scale the sky;
Let theist, atheist, pantheist,
Define and wrangle how they list,
Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer,—
But thou, joy-giver and enjoyer."

We are so used to wrangling and defining, to

building systems of thought, and with odious subtlety criticizing other men's systems, that we hardly know how to get along without these intellectual exercises. What is there to say about a literary man or a philosopher who cares for none of these things?

To become acquainted with Emerson we must discard any conventional idea of the literary man or the philosopher. We must not become too much interested in his works. We must be genuinely interested in the things he was thinking about, so as to find joy in comparing notes. He was not a man of letters in the sense of a maker of books, and he was careless about the articulation of his thought, and so he is the despair of those who try to "place" him.

There are those who think they can explain a man of genius by means of painstaking investigation of the town he lived in, the folks he knew, the books he read, the party to which he belonged, and the family into which he was born. A great deal can be explained in this way, in fact all those things in which he was like the thousands of other

persons who were subjected to similar influences. But what about his genius, which is the one thing in which he differed from those who were about him? It happens that it is this difference which is the matter of vital moment.

There are indeed great men whose difference from their contemporaries is in the quantity of their endowment rather than in its essential quality. They think and feel as does the average man, they share his opinions and habits of thought, only they have everything in greater abundance. They are representative of the time in which they lived and we can not think of them as belonging to any other place or period. This is perhaps what we mean by a *great* man. The term is quantitative.

But there are others whose genius is essentially timeless. They owe very little to their immediate environment. They might have lived anywhere or at any time, and the substance and manner of their thinking would have been very much the same. Ralph Waldo Emerson was of this order. In one sense he was a typical American,

more than that he was a New Englander, and his thought was colored by the experience of the passing day. But it was only colored. The texture was not peculiar to America. That he was born at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the descendant of a long line of Puritan preachers, that he was educated at Harvard College, and became for a time the minister of a Unitarian Church, that he was interested in what was called the Transcendental Movement, that he traveled about the country delivering lyceum lectures, that he took a worthy part in all sorts of reform movements, and that he lived in Concord to a good old age—all these are interesting facts. If we happen to be interested in Emerson, we like to know about them. But they do not enable us to know what manner of man he was, or what gift he may have for us.

Indeed, if we take such facts too seriously, we may obscure the real Emerson, for he certainly did not take them very seriously, and was rather absent-minded in regard to them. It was one of his whimsies to profess a great contempt for for-

eign travel. Concord was good enough for him and he could see all that was most worth seeing without wandering from the vicinity of the town house. But this was not because he had any unusual prejudice for a particular locality, but that he had means of getting away from it that his neighbors did not possess. One place is as good as another to one whose mind is free of the universe.

Emerson's mind was in the most literal sense cosmopolitan; he was a citizen of the world, as no mere traveler can become. The globe trotter is lured on by the expectation of coming to foreign parts. Emerson did not think of any portion of the world as foreign. It was all of a piece. Wherever he happened to be, he was confronted by the marvel of the whole which manifested itself in every part. He was like the citizen in a great metropolis, who leaves to strangers the transitory joys of sightseeing. He goes about his own business, and yet he is gladly conscious all the time that he belongs to the mighty aggregation.

In dealing with such a person, the biographer is always more or less of an intruder. To Emerson the inner life was much more important than the events and circumstances of the outer life. To the inner life as disclosed by himself, we may go directly. Thus only we know what manner of man he was. He was describing himself when he wrote:

"There is an external life, which is educated at school, taught to read, write, cipher, and trade; taught to grasp all the boy can get, urging him to put himself forward, to make himself useful and agreeable in the world, to ride, run, argue, and contend, unfold his talents, shine, conquer, and possess.

"But the inner life sits at home, and does not learn to do things, nor value these feats at all. 'Tis a quiet, wise perception. It loves truth, because it is itself real; it loves right, it knows nothing else; but it makes no progress; was as wise in our first memory of it as now; is just the same now in maturity, and hereafter in age, as it was in

youth. We have grown to manhood and womanhood; we have powers, connection, children, reputations, professions: this makes no account of them all. It lives in the great present; it makes the present great. This tranquil, well-founded, wide-seeing soul is no express-rider, no attorney, no magistrate: it lies in the sun, and broods on the world. A person of this temper once said to a man of much activity, 'I will pardon you that you do so much, and you me that I do nothing.' And Euripides says that 'Zeus hates busybodies and those who do too much.' "

All this is quite foreign to the mind of the typical American. It was not characteristic of the nineteenth century. It is not easy to explain why Emerson should have turned up when he did.

If, however, it is necessary for us to "place" Emerson, and to classify him, it might be as well to ignore the accident of his birth, and put him among those with whom his ways of thinking and speaking would have been most congenial.

He was a philosopher, not in the modern sense,

but in the simpler ancient sense of a lover of wisdom. He belonged in a way with the men who in Athens liked to walk about in the gardens discoursing about the nature of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Perhaps the Greek dialectic might have wearied his more direct mind. It would have seemed a too roundabout way of getting at moral truths.

I rather think that he would have been more at home with less sophisticated thinkers, let us say with the lovers of wisdom in the land of Uz, who gathered around Job, in his happier days before Satan mingled with his affairs. It is in the cool of the evening, and they gather at the gate, and Job discourses on the pleasant mysteries of life. And people who had been bearing the heat and burden of the day, and whose souls were parched, came for refreshment. In their arid lives, it was wonderful to meet a man who was thinking aloud. "My speech dropped upon them, and they waited for me as for the rain."

Such speech comes in sentences that are easily remembered. In the land of Uz people do not

get their ideas from books, but from the lips of a man who has the gift of direct address.

In process of time scribes gather these scattered sentences into volumes, and we have collections of what the Hebrew scholars call Wisdom Literature. So we have the Proverbs, The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach. They contain the observations and the meditations of men who had found time for such things. They are enjoyed by those of kindred temper.

Emerson's essays belong to this Wisdom Literature. They are gnomic, that is to say, they consist of pregnant sentences. Their arrangement is a matter largely of accident.

Had he lived in the land of Uz, Emerson would have uttered these sentences to a little group at the city gate, and trusted to their memories for the preservation of what was of value. Being an American in the nineteenth century, he jotted them down in his note-book when they occurred to him, and then as opportunity offered presented them to groups of his fellow-citizens, gathered on winter evenings in poorly ventilated halls. All

the way from Massachusetts to Iowa he found his audience, and gave them freely of his best. Then acting as his own scribe, he gathered the sentences together into the form familiar to us.

To get his general point of view, read the ninth chapter of Proverbs:

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city. . . . Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled."

It is all very simple and natural. Wisdom is the builder. She builds according to her own plan, and when the house is furnished, she makes her feast and sends forth her maidens with the invitation to her table.

And the thinker, who is he? He is not the architect, he did not plan the building. Nor is he the high priest ordering the sacrifice. He does

not take himself so solemnly. He is only one of the invited guests, who has not lost the sense of wondering curiosity. He can not churlishly sit down to the feast without being introduced to the hostess. He wanders about among all the marvels, seeking her. For, says the son of Sirach, "It is the chief point of Wisdom to know whose gift it is."

In the nineteenth century Ralph Waldo Emerson lived a life that was as simple as that of the antique philosophers. He practised an art which has been thought to be lost—the art of meditation. The fruit of his meditations he offered to all those whom it might concern.

Emerson was a man thinking. There is no Emersonian system of philosophy, only an Emersonian way of looking at things, and that is perfectly simple. There is a legal phrase, "without prejudice," which is used of parties to a controversy, implying that should the negotiations fail, nothing that has passed shall be taken advantage of thereafter. Thus should the defendant offer *without prejudice* to pay half the claim, the plain-

tiff can not consider this offer as an admission of his having the right to *some* payment.

To read the words of Emerson in the spirit in which they were written, we must remember to take what he says without prejudice. Each sentence makes its own appeal, and it is for us to determine whether it rings true or false. But we must not hold him responsible for the inferences which we may draw. He was not uttering oracles, though the form might sometimes seem oracular. He aimed to challenge us rather than to secure docile acceptance of his ideas. He did not attempt at any one time to state the whole truth. He preferred to state a half truth in such a manner that we should be ready to supply the other half. Instead of avoiding extreme opinions, he wished to have them confront each other in the same mind.

"This is true, that other is true. But our geometry cannot span the extreme points and reconcile them. What to do? By obeying each thought frankly, by harping, or if you will, pounding on

each string, we learn at last its power. By the same obedience to others' thoughts, we learn theirs and then comes some reasonable hope of harmonizing them."

The method which he recommended and which he followed was in the highest degree unsystematic. It was "the method of taking up in turn each of the leading topics which belong to our scheme of human life, and by stating all that is agreeable to experience on one hand, and doing the same justice to the opposing facts, the true limitations will appear. Any excess of emphasis on one part would be corrected and a just balance made."

In other words, Emerson would never assume the cool judicial attitude in regard to any vital question. He would speak as an advocate of the side which for the moment seemed to him most important. But he would always reserve the right to state the other side just as strongly. Not only did he claim the right to take both sides, but also to change the subject as often as he liked.

He believed that there were certain general principles which were applicable to all the various professions and callings. One who was in Milton's phrase "a skillful considerer of human things" had a right to express his opinions, for in spite of all the modern division of labor, life is still made up of a few simple elements.

In the following chapters I have made no attempt to harmonize the views of Emerson. That would only obscure the sharp outlines of each separate view. One who would know Emerson must not read his word with the docility of a mere disciple. He must rather take it as a game and match his wits against a quick antagonist.

It is the mental attitude which that unconventional sixteenth-century preacher, Bishop Hugh Latimer, sought to inspire in his congregation. In his famous Sermon on the Cards, he challenged his congregation to play a game of cards, which in those days was called "Triumph."

Quoth Latimer: "Whereas, ye are wont to celebrate Christmas in playing at cards, I intend by God's grace to deal unto you Christ's cards. The

game we shall play at shall be called the triumph (trump) which if it be well played, he that dealeth shall win, the players shall likewise win, and the standers and lookers on shall do the same, inasmuch that there is no man that is willing to play at this Triumph with these cards but that they shall all be winners, and no losers. Let therefore every Christian man and woman play at these cards, that they may have and obtain the triumph; you must mark also that the triumph must apply to fetch home with him all the other cards whatsoever suit they be of. Now then take ye this first card which must appear and be shewed to you as followeth."

In some such way Emerson invites us to join in his favorite recreation. It is the free play of thought in which "he that dealeth shall win, the players shall likewise win and the standers and lookers on shall do the same."[2]

## CHAPTER II

### A DISCRIMINATING OPTIMIST

*"I am a willow of the wilderness,*
*Loving the wind that bent me."*

ONE of the most familar terms of reproach in these days is "Victorian." It is used by clever literary persons who have rebelled against the standards of their immediate predecessors. It implies a certain smugness and self-satisfaction which is very irritating to persons who are conscious of the cruel realities of this unfinished world. The Victorians are supposed to have been incorrigible optimists who mistook the Fool's Paradise in which they lived for the final resting place of humanity. They were worshipers of the respectabilities, and were content with the cant of liberalism as their fathers had been content with the cant of Toryism.

To-day, however, we are taught that it is our duty to face the grimmest realities, and not to

flinch when we see something that is ugly and threatening. We must see how the other half lives, and we must free ourselves from amiable delusions.

In turning from the work of our painfully sincere realists to Emerson, the first impression is that we are going back to that discredited state of mind, the early Victorian optimism. For Emerson faces the existing world with a smiling face. He takes for granted that there is a friendliness in its laws, and that the ultimate reality is not to be feared. He has a frank predilection for beauty and does not feel it his duty to feed his imagination on what is ugly and unwholesome. He is always glad to be alive, and glad to find so many other creatures alive at the same time. Sometimes he has a too debonair way of making light of the evils that are encountered by earnest people.

But those who look upon the optimism of Emerson as a part of the conventionalism of his time are, I think, superficial in their judgments. In the first place, he was not a Victorian, but an

American, who was not under the spell of the good queen and her court. No one was less disposed to imitate the literary conventions then dominant in England. He was no more a Victorian than was Abraham Lincoln. There was nothing smug in his optimism. He was not an apologist for the existing state of things, nor interested in proving that this is the best of all possible worlds. He did not try to make himself agreeable by calling evil good. He recognized the existence of an enormous number of bad and cruel things. "Nature as we know her is no saint."

He taught that nature does not coddle us, nor provide ready-made houses or clothes. She leaves us to make these things for ourselves. And the process of experiment is never an easy one. It is a long and tedious way by which we travel toward truth. Nature does not tell us what is good for us; to discover this is part of our experience.

"I compared notes with one of my friends who expects everything of the Universe and is disap-

pointed, and I found that I began at the other extreme, expecting nothing, and am always full of thanks for moderate blessings."

So far from denying or seeking to hide the darker and more painful aspects of the world, he admitted them and placed them where they belong, *at the beginning.* They belong to the realm of chaos and night.

But the outstanding fact is that there has been a gradual emergence from chaos. The existence of man as a reasoning creature becomes more wonderful as we think of the odds against it. No good thing can be had without effort.

But the real question is, "Is the effort worth while?" You may say that it is not. You do not know whether or not you shall succeed, and therefore you will not try.

Emerson declares that the effort is most gloriously worth while. It reveals the joy of creation.

"A man is a golden impossibility. Power keeps quite another road than the turnpike of choice and will, namely, the subterranean and invisible

tunnels and channels of life. Life is a series of surprises and would not be worth taking and keeping if it were not. . . . Nature hates calculators, her methods are saltatory and impulsive. . . . The mind goes antagonizing on, and never prospers but by fits. We thrive on casualties. . . . . Every man is an impossibility till he is born, everything is impossible till we see it a success."

At this point it would be well to lay down Emerson's essay on Experience and do a little meditating on the words, "the mind goes antagonizing on."

Here is a philosophy that goes behind the old dispute between the optimist and the pessimist. The ordinary optimist tries to prove that there is no real antagonism between the facts of nature and the ideals of the human soul. Everything is exquisitely fitted to produce happiness. The pessimist denies this and insists on the flagrant opposition between what is and what ought to be. He

arranges a deadly parallel between the world of the ideals and the world of hard reality.

Emerson answers that there is an antagonism. The human spirit must not be bullied by that which lies beneath it. It must assert its sovereignty, and in its resistance it makes the discovery of its power. It goes "antagonizing on." That is the way of the conqueror.

"The essence of tragedy does not seem to me to lie in any list of particular evils. After we have enumerated famine, fever, inaptitude, mutilation, rack, madness and loss of friends, we have not yet included the proper tragic element, which is Terror, and which does not respect definite evils but indefinite; an ominous spirit which haunts the afternoon and night, idleness and solitude."

A low haggard spirit sits by our side, "casting the fashion of uncertain evils, a sinister presentiment, a power of the imagination to disclose things orderly and cheerful and show them in

startling array. Hark, what sounds on the night wind? the cry of murder in that friendly house, see those marks of stamping feet, of hidden riot. The whisper overhead, the detected glance, the glare of malignity, ungrounded fears, suspicions, half knowledge and mistakes, darken the brow and chill the heart of man. And accordingly it is natures not clear, nor of quick and steady perceptions, but imperfect characters from which something is hidden that all others see, that suffer most from these causes. In those persons who move the profoundest pity, tragedy seems to consist in temperament, not in events. There are people who have an appetite for grief; pleasure is not strong enough, and they crave pain, Mithridatic stomachs which must be fed on poisoned bread, natures so downed that no prosperity can soothe their ragged and dishevelled desolation. They mishear and misbelieve, they suspect and dread. They handle every nettle, and tread on every snake in the meadow."

It is here that Emerson made his stand. It is not necessary for us to apologize for facts or to

attempt to vindicate Eternal Providence. Events come and we must face them. But the Terror we must not yield to, this we can overcome. There is a health of the spirit which may be cultivated and which makes us immune to evil influences.

The optimism of Emerson was not to be expressed in the phrase, "looking at the bright side of things." That is the lazy man's optimism. There is a homelier phrase, "making the best of it." Let the circumstances be what they may, the brave man accepts them resolved to make the best of them. And the surprise is that when he puts all his strength into the task, the result is something better than he had planned. Even when worst has come to worst, the hero turns upon the hostile powers and finds the Best which he has worshiped afar now realized in his own will.

"Trembler, do not whine and chide,
Art thou not also real?
Why shouldst thou stoop to poor excuse;
Turn on the accuser roundly, say,
'Here am I, here will I abide

Forever to myself soothfast.
Go thou, sweet Heaven, or at thy pleasure
stay!'
Already Heaven with thee its lot has cast."

The most complete expression of Emerson's discriminating optimism can be found in his essay on Fate. Here he states the argument of the pessimist in the strongest terms. There are forces at work which bring pain and loss. There are laws which we can not control. There are tragedies which are inevitable. But the good man confronts the evil fate. Emerson believed that the result of that conflict was the creation of a higher good than had before been perceived. The struggle with Fate produced power.

"Thus we trace Fate, in matter, mind, and morals—in race, in retardations of strata, and in thought and character as well. It is everywhere bound or limitation. But Fate has its lord; limitation its limits; is different seen from above and from below; from within and from without. For, though Fate is immense, so is power, which is the

other fact in the dual world, immense. If Fate follows and limits power, power attends and antagonizes Fate. We must respect Fate as natural history, but there is more than natural history. For who and what is this criticism that pries into the matter? Man is not order of nature, sack and sack, belly and members, link in a chain, nor any ignominious baggage, but a stupendous antagonism, a dragging together of the poles of the universe. He betrays his relation to what is below him—thick-skulled, small-brained, fishy, quadrumanous—quadruped ill-disguised, hardly escaped into biped, and has paid for the new powers by loss of some of the old ones. But the lightning which explodes and fashions planets, maker of planet and suns, is in him. On one side, elemental order, sandstone and granite, rock-ledges, peat-bog, forest, sea and shore; and, on the other part, thought, the spirit which composes and decomposes nature—here they are, side by side, God and devil, mind and matter, king and conspirator, belt and spasm, riding peacefully together in the eye and brain of every man.

"Nor can he blink the free-will. To hazard the contradiction—freedom is necessary. If you please to plant yourself on the side of Fate, and say, Fate is all; then we say, a part of Fate is the freedom of man. For ever wells up the impulse of choosing and acting in the soul. Intellect annuls Fate. So far as a man thinks, he is free. And though nothing is more disgusting than the crowing about liberty by slaves, as most men are, and the flippant mistaking for freedom of some paper preamble like a 'Declaration of Independence,' or the statute right to vote, by those who have never dared to think or to act, yet it is wholesome to man to look not at Fate, but the other way: the practical view is the other. His sound relation to these facts is to use and command, not to cringe to them. 'Look not on Nature, for her name is fatal,' said the oracle. The too much contemplation of these limits induces meanness. They who talk much of destiny, their birth-star, etc., are in a lower dangerous plane, and invite the evils they fear.

"I cited the instinctive and heroic races as proud believers in Destiny. They conspire with it; a loving resignation is with the event. But the dogma makes a different impression, when it is held by the weak and lazy. 'Tis weak and vicious people who cast the blame on Fate. The right use of Fate is to bring up our conduct to the loftiness of nature. Rude and invincible except by themselves are the elements. So let man be. Let him empty his breast of his windy conceits, and show his lordship by manners and deeds on the scale of nature. Let him hold his purpose as with the tug of gravitation. No power, no persuasion, no bribe, shall make him give up his point. A man ought to compare advantageously with a river, an oak, or a mountain. He shall have not less the flow, the expansion, and the resistance of these.

" 'Tis the best use of Fate to teach a fatal courage. Go face the fire at sea, or the cholera in your friend's house, or the burglar in your own, or what danger lies in the way of duty, knowing

you are guarded by the cherubim of Destiny. If you believe in Fate to your harm, believe it, at least, for your good.

"For, if Fate is so prevailing, man also is part of it, and can confront Fate with Fate."

# CHAPTER III

## THE OPENER OF DOORS

*"Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee and do not try to make the Universe a blind alley."*—EMERSON'S JOURNAL (1841).

THERE are certain minds which have exercised a vast influence over the thought of the world, as constructors of intellectual systems. Their ambition has been to reduce all things to a formula. They become masters of existing knowledge and arrange it in orderly fashion. Thus Thomas Aquinas summed up the thought of the middle ages in a solid theology to be received by all who came after him. John Calvin, with lawyer-like logic, did the same thing for sixteenth-century Protestantism. Herbert Spencer, with prodigious industry, gathered an immense number of facts and attempted to bring them all into an agreement with his own scientific formula.

Up to a certain point the system-maker is a

helper to all those who would live a reasonable intellectual life. He shows us where to put our facts and to a certain degree how to use them. The difficulty comes when new facts are discovered which do not fit into the system, or when in the course of our intellectual development we come upon a fresh point of view.

Then the system becomes a blind alley. We are led into it by a perfectly logical process, but there is no logical way out of it. The mind goes round and round and is conscious of the futility of its own effort. The universe is narrowed to the dimensions of a rigid creed. The system now shuts out more of reality than it explains.

It is when we become conscious of the dangers of making the universe a blind alley and becoming entrapped in rigid forms that we appreciate the function of philosophers like William James and Bergson. They are emancipators of the intellect. In their keen criticism of dogmatic systems they show us a way out. Reality, they assure us, is something vaster than any definition of it.

Emerson belonged to this little company of emancipators, and he went about his business in a very simple and yet effective way. He attacked the assumption that what is usually called consistency is a virtue. No saying of his is more often quoted, and more generally misunderstood:

"A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day."

That may be made to seem like a plea for careless and irresponsible ways of thinking and speaking. What standard are we to have by which to test our mental processes? I have heard the words quoted as if they offered an excuse for intellectual lawlessness.

SAN ANSELMO,
MARIN COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

We approach Emerson's serious meaning only when we emphasize the adjective. It is a *foolish* consistency which is the hobgoblin of little minds. The fundamental question is *"consistency with what?"* The little mind is thinking not of reality but of its own previous utterances. When an opinion is to be expressed, it says, "This must be made consistent with what I said yesterday. Let me see! What did I say yesterday?" Then, with solemn conscientiousness, yesterday's statement is repeated and there is felt the satisfaction which comes with duty done.

But what if to-day's fact is really different from that of yesterday, and can not be expressed accurately by the same phrase? This possibility the little mind does not entertain. It will not allow itself to be contradicted, and so the process goes on which St. Paul describes, "they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

Emerson's real plea is for consistency. But we must be consistent not with a form of words

which we have adopted, but with a living reality which we encounter day by day.

What have you seen to-day? What have you done? What new aspect of the universe has become clear to you? What are the facts revealed in your present consciousness? These are the questions that are asked of a person who is using his mind. And his answers are valuable only as they are simple and direct.

In a court of justice this simplicity is required. The witness who is trying to make his answers consistent with one another and with a preconceived theory is sure to come to grief. The cross-questioner will discover flaws in the evidence. The only safe course is to tell the facts as they occurred.

Most of our intellectual confusion comes from the attempts to arrange our opinions according to an artificial order. The catechism is arranged in advance of experience. The questions follow one another in logical order, and each question has its appropriate answer. It is all very

satisfactory until the answers are sharply challenged. How do we happen to know so much? How are we able to answer so glibly?

To Emerson the chief value of a catechism lay in the questions, not in the answers. That the deepest and most persistent questions have no satisfactory answers did not depress him. It only proved that both the mind that asks and the universe which delays the answer are greater than we thought. Their meaning can not be expressed in any form of words. He hears the Sphinx saying to the Soul:

> "Thou art the unanswered question;
> Couldst see thy proper eye,
> Alway it asketh, asketh;
> And each answer is a lie.
> So take thy quest through nature,
> It through thousand natures ply;
> Ask on, thou clothed eternity;
> Time is the false reply."

The joy of the follower of Truth and Beauty is wonderfully expressed in the little poem called "Forerunners." We are out-of-doors, and the

air is bracing, and the distant hills are alluring. What does it matter that we do not catch up with our "happy guides"? It is enough that we are free to follow. Let others sing of the satisfactions of achievement. Emerson is satisfied with a life that is a continual quest.

"Long I followed happy guides,
I could never reach their sides;
Their step is forth, and, ere the day
Breaks up their leaguer, and away.
Keen my sense, my heart was young,
Right good-will my sinews strung,
But no speed of mine avails
To hunt upon their shining trails.
On and away, their hasting feet
Make the morning proud and sweet;
Flowers they strew—I catch the scent;
Or tone of silver instrument
Leaves on the wind melodious trace;
Yet I could never see their face.
On eastern hills I see their smokes,
Mixed with mist by distant lochs.
I met many travellers
Who the road had surely kept;
They saw not my fine revellers,—
These had crossed them while they slept.
Some had heard their fair report,
In the country or the court.

Fleetest couriers alive
Never yet could once arrive,
As they went or they returned,
At the house where these sojourned.
Sometimes their strong speed they slacken,
Though they are not overtaken;
In sleep their jubilant troop is near,—
I tuneful voices overhear;
It may be in wood or waste,—
At unawares 'tis come and past.
Their near camp my spirit knows
By signs gracious as rainbows.
I thenceforward, and long after,
Listen for their harp-like laughter,
And carry in my heart, for days,
Peace that hallows rudest ways."

It is not merely the poetic imagination which opens the doors into an enchanted country where one may wander endlessly. The sober reason has also an emancipatory power. There are realities which lie beyond the limits which the dogmatist defines. They may not be logically justified but they are nevertheless a part of the order of the universe. When we cease to dogmatize we become conscious of an order more wonderful than that which we had imagined possible. Things exist side by side which we had supposed to be

absolutely incompatible. We can not logically reconcile them, but there they are.

"The world refuses to be analyzed by addition and subtraction. When we are young, we spend much time and pains in filling our note-books with all definitions of Religion, Love, Poetry, Politics, Art, in the hope that, in the course of a few years, we shall have condensed into our encyclopedia the net value of all the theories at which the world has yet arrived. But year after year our tables get no completeness, and at last we discover that our curve is a parabola, whose arcs will never meet.

"Neither by detachment, neither by aggregation, is the integrity of the intellect transmitted to its works, but by a vigilance which brings the intellect in its greatness and best state to operate every moment. It must have the same wholeness which nature has. Although no diligence can rebuild the universe in a model, by the best accumulation or disposition of details, yet does the world reappear in miniature in every event, so that all

the laws of nature may be read in the smallest fact. The intellect must have the like perfection in its apprehension and in its works."

Along with Emerson's insistence on an absolute freedom in thinking we must remember his emphasis on the principle of identity which he discovers everywhere. The universe, he continually tells us is not a blind alley, neither is it a mere welter of conflicting forces. It is marvelously complicated, but touch it at any point and you will find it consistent with itself. Could we understand one part of it we would have the key to all mysteries.

"The universe is represented in every one of its particles. Everything in nature contains all the powers of nature. Everything is made of one hidden stuff; as the naturalist sees one type under every metamorphosis, and regards a horse as a running man, a fish as a swimming man, a bird as a flying man, a tree as a rooted man. Each new form repeats not only the main character of

the type, but part for part all the details, all the aims, furtherances, hindrances, energies, and whole system of every other. Every occupation, trade, art, transaction, is a compend of the world and a correlative of every other. Each one is an entire emblem of human life; of its good and ill, its trials, its enemies, its course, and its end. And each one must somehow accommodate the whole man, and recite all his destiny.

"The world globes itself in a drop of dew. The microscope cannot find the animalcule which is less perfect for being little. Eyes, ears, taste, smell, motion, resistance, appetite, and organs of reproduction that take hold on eternity—all find room to consist in the small creature. So do we put our life into every act. The true doctrine of omnipresence is, that God reappears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb. The value of the universe contrives to throw itself into every point. If the good is there, so is the evil; if the affinity, so the repulsion; if the force, so the limitation."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PARISH OF YOUNG MEN

*"My parish is young men inquiring their way."*

EMERSON'S parish did not include all young men. Indeed he was very ill at ease with the typical "young person." And there are many anecdotes which indicate that the young person shared the embarrassment. The gregariousness of youth with its tumultuous mass movements were rather appalling to one of his temperament. Nor was he fitted for the difficult rôle of spiritual adviser.

Emerson's widely scattered parish was made up of another kind of young men. They were young men who were not seeking to find out *his* way, but their own. He encouraged them in it. That made them his debtors for life.

These parishioners of his could not possibly be gathered into one congregation. They formed no

cult or party. Each was so absorbed in his own special endeavor that he had little time to make the acquaintance of his fellow parishioner, but each in the formative period of his life had received the stimulus he most needed. He had been bewildered by the conflicting counsels of his elders. Each counsellor had said, "Be like me." Then one clear voice had suggested, "Why not be yourself?"

The suggestion was so unexpected and yet so reasonable that it was acted upon. The young man found himself, which is the one discovery that counts.

America prides itself on being the land of the free. We have had many political emancipators, but the roll of intellectual emancipators is short. Having dethroned kings, we live under the fear of public opinion. The aggregate mind tyrannizes over the individual intellect. There is a deadly average which it is not considered safe for one to pass.

To his parish of young men Emerson was always preaching that the world is in dire need of

men with fresh insight who are not satisfied with things as they are. The "average man" should not be content with the average attainment. He has within him powers which rightly used could lift him far above his present condition. He is, and of right ought to be, a free and independent soul. A decent respect for the opinion of the world demands that he should declare his independence in unmistakable terms.

"What strikes us in the fine genius is that which belongs of right to every one. A man should know himself for a necessary actor. A link was wanting between two craving parts of nature, and he was hurled into being as the bridge over that yawning need, the mediator betwixt two else unmarriageable facts. His two parents held each of one of the wants, and the union of foreign constitutions in him enables him to do gladly and gracefully what the assembled human race could not have sufficed to do. He knows his materials; he applies himself to his work; he can not read, or think, or look, but he unites the hitherto

separated strands—into a perfect cord. The thoughts he delights to utter are the reason of his incarnation. Is it for him to account himself cheap and superfluous, or to linger by the wayside for opportunities? Did he not come into being because something must be done which he and no other is and does? If only he *sees,* the world will be visible enough. He need not study where to stand, nor to put things in favorable lights; in him is the light, from him all things are illuminated to their centre. What patron shall he ask for employment and reward? Hereto was he born, to deliver the thought of his heart from the universe to the universe, to do an office which nature could not forego, nor he be discharged from rendering, and then immerge again into the holy silence and eternity out of which as a man he arose. God is rich, and many more men than one he harbours in his bosom, biding their time and the needs and the beauty of all. Is not this the theory of every man's genius or faculty? Why then goest thou as some Boswell or listening worshipper to this saint or to that? That is the

only lese-majesty. Here art thou with whom so long the universe travailed in labor; darest thou think meanly of thyself whom the stalwart Fate brought forth to unite his ragged sides, to shoot the gulf, to reconcile the irreconcilable?"

As for the chill wisdom of age with its timid counsels, let the young man defy it. Length of days does not bring wisdom unless it is accompanied by a power of spiritual rejuvenation, and then it becomes the wisdom of perpetual youthfulness.

"Why should we import rags and relics into the new hour? Nature abhors the old, and old age seems the only disease; all others run into this one. We call it by many names—fever, intemperance, insanity, stupidity, and crime; they are all forms of old age; they are rest, conservatism, appropriation, inertia, not newness, not the way onward. We grizzle every day. I see no need of it. Whilst we converse with what is above us, we do not grow old, but grow young. Infancy, youth, receptive, aspiring, with religious

eye looking upward, counts itself nothing, and abandons itself to the instruction flowing from all sides. But the man and woman of seventy assume to know all, they have outlived their hope, they renounce aspiration, accept the actual for the necessary, and talk down to the young. Let them, then, become organs of the Holy Ghost; let them be lovers; let them behold truth; and their eyes are uplifted, their wrinkles smoothed, they are perfumed again with hope and power. This old age ought not to creep on a human mind. In nature every moment is new; the past is always swallowed and forgotten; the coming only is sacred. Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energizing spirit. No love can be bound by oath or covenant to secure it against a higher love. No truth so sublime but it may be trivial tomorrow in the light of new thoughts. People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them."

The reader will observe that Emerson in the midst of his praise of the spirit of youth gives a

sly dig at one of the foibles of his parishioners. There is a quality of bumptiousness which is often found in early life. Emerson treats it as a kind of premature senility. "Whilst we converse with what is above us we do not grow old." Conversely the person who cannot look up religiously to something above his present attainments had aged rapidly. A person may be a dotard while yet in the twenties. This was a sobering thought not unfrequently presented to the parish of young men.

# CHAPTER V

## SPENT THE DAY AT ESSEX JUNCTION

*"August 16, 1868. Came home last night from Vermont with Ellen. Stopped at Middlebury on the 11th, Tuesday, and read my discourse on Greatness, and the good work and influence of heroic scholars. On Wednesday spent the day at Essex Junction, and traversed the banks and much of the bed of the Winooski river, much admiring the falls, and the noble mountain peaks of Mansfield and Camel's Hump (which there appears to be the highest), and the view of the Adirondacks across the lake."*

ONE intent on becoming intimate with Emerson might well postpone reading the Oversoul, till he had meditated on the text, "Spent the Day at Essex Junction." Perhaps no junction point in all New England has been the innocent cause of more vituperation than Essex Junction. Here, for more than a generation, impatient people have alighted and waited for trains which were not arranged for their convenience. To the commercial traveler, Essex Junction rep-

resents a sheer waste of time. To the summer tourist it means a postponement of enjoyment. It is a place on the way to somewhere else.

But to Emerson, Essex Junction was not conceived of as a point of departure until the hour came when he must actually depart. This was not till evening. In the meantime, he was living in Essex Junction rather than merely passing through it. There was no hurry, so that he had ample time to enjoy the banks of the Winooski river and the view of the distant mountains.

Emerson was on the way to Mount Mansfield, at which he arrived in due time. The next morning at the Mountain Hotel "a man went through the house ringing a loud bell and shouting 'Sunrise,' and everybody dressed in haste and went down to the piazza." Emerson joined the eager procession and had his look with the rest of them. "After many sharp looks at the heavens and earth, we descended to breakfast. I found in this company many agreeable people."

In this recital you have a glimpse of his philosophy of life. Essex Junction, Mount Mans-

field and the troop of fellow-boarders who snatched a hasty sunrise on the way to breakfast were not all alike. In fact, they were quite different. But they were all equally real. The contemplation of them absorbed successive moments of his conscious life. Each for a little while occupied the foreground of his mind and became the representative of the cosmos. Each in its place and in its time was interesting. When it came to the question which was the most interesting, he would let them fight it out among themselves.

This was the philosophy of the Mountain and the Squirrel.

> "I am not so large as you,
> You are not so small as I
> And not half so spry."

That talents differ is the fact on which we must agree before there can be any toleration or appreciation. Most of us have a bad habit of taking a personal preference and elevating it into a universal standard of value. Each new object is

weighed in the balance and found wanting. We say, this is not that, and therefore it is not worth our attention. The word "discrimination" takes on a hostile meaning. We are likely to say "discriminate *against*." The word "criticize" has also a suggestion of unfriendliness, for it is concerned with the perception of differences.

Emerson's habitual point of view was that of appreciative discrimination. This is not that, of course not; it is quite different—that is what makes it interesting. Even where the tubs look alike, it is pleasant to consider that each stands on its own bottom.

What is the most important place in all the world? For you it is the place where you actually are at this moment. This is the only point from which at this particular time the universe is visible to you. If you are truly alive, you do not need a man with a bell to summon you to the sunrise. The day has its clear call.

"The inevitable morning
Finds them who in cellars be

And be sure that all-loving Nature
Will smile in a factory.
Yon ridge of purple landscape,
Yon sky beneath the walls,
Hold all the hidden wonders
In their scanty intervals."

There is a curious restlessness which is often mistaken for idealism. Not finding satisfaction in our real environment, we are filled with the desire to be somewhere else. When this restlessness becomes chronic, there is "that driven feeling" which transforms the pursuit of happiness into a hurried flight from unhappiness. Even our holidays become nerve-destroying tasks, as with jaded minds we are carried about to the places where we wait for sensations that do not come. And with our eyes on our watches, we know that we must hurry if we are not to miss the next sight that we have paid for.

Palestine was not a tourist country in the days when the author of Ecclesiastes wrote of the various vanities he had seen under the sun; else he might have added a lamentation over the futility of an empty mind going about in search of cul-

ture. This is a vanity I have seen. I have seen a rich, foolish man who came to a city strange and old, and that had a great history. Yet did he not seek to know what that history was, nor did he save an hour for quiet meditation on what he saw. He spent much gold to come to the place where the city was, and when he was there he worried over the delay in getting away. And that foolish rich man remembered nothing of the city except a dinner which was not so good as he might have had at home.

Because he found so much to interest him at home Emerson takes a whimsical pleasure in speaking against foreign travel as a means of culture. But he evidently had in mind the excessive value that was in his day put upon Europe and its traditions.

His disparagement of travel did not arise from any incuriosity. He had an eager desire to see all the world. But he was like a small boy who, having learned that the procession is to pass by his own house, takes his position on his own door

step. Why should he go away when by staying at home he is sure to see the show?

"It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours, we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion, call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still, and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance, that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign, and not like an interloper or a valet.

"I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe, for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the

hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

"Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go."

There are times when the medium at a seance excuses herself for her inability to put the sitter in communication with departed spirits. She does

not know what is the matter, but "the conditions are not right."

Every traveler has experienced a similar difficulty. He has spent time and money to go to a famous spot; his body has been transported but not his soul. There are inhibitions that prevent imaginative communion with the mighty past.

Emerson preferred to be in Essex Junction when the spiritual conditions were right rather than in Rome when his mind was not properly functioning. Essex Junction is a wonderful place if one happens to be in the mood for seeing it.

# CHAPTER VI

## FRIENDSHIP WITHOUT INTIMACY

*"There is a strange face in the Freshman class whom I should like to know very much. He has a great deal of character in his features and should be a fast friend or a bitter enemy. His name is ————. I shall endeavor to become better acquainted with him and wish, if possible, to recall at a future period the singular sensations which his presence produced in me."*—JOURNAL, 1820.

EMERSON was an upper classman, albeit only seventeen years of age, when he wrote thus of Martin Gay of Hingham, afterward a distinguished analytical chemist living in Boston. Emerson's son, commenting on this passage, says that there is no evidence that his father, either in college or afterward, ever made any advances toward further acquaintance. It does not appear that he ever really knew him, yet he was always interested to hear of him, and was grieved at his untimely death in 1850. The two men were en-

tirely different in their temperaments and interests, Gay being known by his classmates as "cool Gay."

This capacity for shy admirations for his opposites, and for friendly interests in people with whom he would find it difficult to keep up a conversation, was characteristic of Emerson. He was sometimes painfully conscious of it as a barrier which prevented him from really "getting at" people whom he wished to know. At other times he defended the attitude that was natural to him, and so made a virtue of his necessity.

To most persons, Emerson's essay on Friendship is unsatisfactory as an exposition of the subject, though it is very revealing of the author's state of mind. "Friendship," says Emerson, "like the immortality of the soul, is too good to be believed." And his account of friendship has a fine aloofness that befits the love for a disembodied spirit rather than a warm attachment to an imperfect creature of flesh and blood.

One of the conditions that Emerson would make in a treaty of friendship would be that

neither party should trespass on the personality of others. It was friendship by "absent treatment."

"Why should we desecrate noble and beautiful souls by intruding on them? Why insist on rash personal relations with your friend? Why go to his house, and know his mother and brother and sisters? Why be visited by him at your own? Are these things material to our covenant? Leave this touching and clawing. Let him be to me a spirit.

"To my friend I write a letter, and from him I receive a letter. That seems to you little. It suffices me.

"You shall not come nearer to a man by getting into his house. We see the noble afar off, why should we intrude?"

In all this we feel that Emerson was riding his high horse. It is a shy man's way of comforting himself for something that he unfortunately lacks, but which he would give anything to possess. He

was, to use Paul's phrase, glorying in his infirmities. That which he was praising was not friendship but sublimated hero-worship, which is quite a different thing.

In the privacy of his note-books he treats his infirmity in quite a different spirit. He laments the fact that he was not a good mixer. Like so many New Englanders, it was difficult for him to establish personal relations.

At the age of twenty, when looking forward to the ministry, he makes this self-criticism:

"Every comparison of myself with my mates that six or seven, perhaps sixteen or seventeen, years have made has convinced me that there exists a signal defect of character which neutralizes in great part the just influence my talents ought to have." He expresses it as the "absence of common sympathies." By this he seems to mean the absence of the material for "small talk." "Its bitter fruits are a sore uneasiness in the company of most men and women, a frigid fear of offending and jealousy of disrespect, an inability to lead and an unwillingness to follow the cur-

rent conversation. . . . In my frequent humiliation I am compelled to remember the poor boy who cried, 'I told you, father, they would find me out.'" He sums up his youthful confession, "What is called a warm heart, I have it not."

When he was sixty, he was conscious of the same limitation. He jotted down in his notebook: "Barriers of man impassable. They who should be friends cannot pass into each other. Friends are fictitious, founded on some momentary experience. But what we want is consecutiveness."

All this is not evidence of lack of a warm heart. It was rather a lack of an easy way of expressing what he felt. The chill was not in himself, but in the atmosphere that was about him. But there was evidently a personal experience behind this generalization about society.

"Society, like wealth, is good for those who understand it. It is a foolish waste of time for those who do not. It seems impossible for any one to expand in a crowd to his natural dimen-

sions. All character seems to fade away from all the accomplices. Every woman seems suffering for a chair, and you accuse yourself and commiserate those you talk to."

There is something delightfully amusing in Emerson's analysis of his own failure as a conversationalist.

"It seemed, as I mused in the streets of Boston on the unpropitious effect of the town on my humor, that there needs a certain deliberation and tenacity in the entertainment of a thought—a certain longanimity to make that confidence and stability which can meet the demands others make on us. I am too quick-eyed and unstable. My thoughts are too short, as they say my sentences are. I step along from stone to stone over the Lethe which gurgles around my path, but the odds are that my companion encounters me just as I leave one stone, and before my foot has well reached the other, and down I tumble into Lethe water. But the man of long wind who receives

his thought with a certain phlegmatic entertainment, and unites himself to it for the time, as a sailor to a boat, has a better principle of poise and is not easily moved from the perpendicular."

With the remarkable group of men who made Concord famous, Emerson was on terms of familiar friendship. For Bronson Alcott he cherished an admiration which seems extravagant. He loved to walk and talk with the shy poet, Ellery Channing. Thoreau was for two years an inmate of Emerson's house, and the two men worked in the garden together. In Boston Emerson was a member of the Saturday Club, where he continually met Longfellow, Holmes, Agassiz and the rest.

Yet he was not a man to shine in such society. His mind was contemplative, rather than conversational. He did not care to "hold his own" in a controversy. Why should he? "Emerson was a good citizen and a good neighbor with his neighbors, always went to town meeting and listened intently to the strong spirits who ruled the dis-

cussions, without taking any part in them himself."

The most notable of his friendships was with Thomas Carlyle. The correspondence between them continued for many years, and there were many expressions of esteem. The friendship was a real one, but the fact that the broad Atlantic lay between them was a great aid to their good fellowship. For though the two men liked each other, they did not like the same things.

Carlyle threatened to visit America, and we may be sure that he would not have enjoyed the visit. Emerson's cheery faith in the common man seemed to the testy Scotchman a bit of sentimentalism. They both believed in hero-worship, but they did not worship the same heroes. New England Transcendentalism did not agree with Carlyle's temper.

Emerson sent a copy of the *Dial* to his friend. Carlyle writes, "The Dial No. 1 came duly. Of course I read it with interest; it is the utterance of what is youngest in your land, pure, etherial as the voices of the morning! And yet—you

know me—for me it is *too* etherial, speculative, theoretic; all theory becomes more and more confessedly inadequate, untrue, unsatisfactory, almost a kind of mocking to me."

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." And these tokens of friendship were seldom absent from the letters that passed between the two. Carlyle writes of the impression Emerson's essays made upon him:

"It is a *sermon* to me as all your deliberate utterances are; a real *word* which I feel to be such —alas, almost or altogether the one such, in a world all full of jargons, hearsays, echoes and vain noises which cannot pass with me for *words*. This is a praise far beyond any 'literary' one; literary praises are not worth repeating in comparison. For the rest I have to object still (what you will call objecting to the Law of Nature) that we find you a speaker indeed, but as it were a *soliloquizer* on the eternal mountain tops only, in vast solitudes where men and their affairs lie all hushed in a dim remoteness; and only the *man*

and the stars are visible, whom so fine a fellow seems he, we could perpetually punch into and say, 'Why won't you come and help us then? We have terrible need of one man like you down among us! It is cold and vacant up there; nothing paintable but rainbows and emotions; come down and you shall do life pictures, passions, facts—which transcend all thought, and leave it stuttering and stammering!' To which he answers that he won't, can't and doesn't want to (as the cockneys have it): so I leave him and say, 'You Western Gymnosophist! Well, we can afford one man for that, too.' "

This is all very well for a friendship carried on by correspondence. Carlyle thinks of himself as a man who is dealing with concrete realities, while Emerson is dealing in remote abstractions.

But had they lived in the same town with opportunity to discuss the practical questions of politics and social welfare, they would have come into collision. The fact was that Emerson was as much interested in concrete realities as Carlyle,

but he came to different conclusions in regard to them. Carlyle believed in government by strong men, like Frederick the Great and Cromwell. Democracy was an abomination to him. A statesman like Lincoln, who thought of himself as an interpreter of the popular will, was altogether outside his sympathy. Liberalism of the modern sort seemed to him utter weakness and muddle-headedness.

Emerson, though he preferred to write about principles rather than their immediate applications, was never in doubt as to which side he was on. The principles which he preached were the ones which were being applied by the democratic reformers of his own day. He believed in the movements at which Carlyle scoffed. Answering his friend's criticism, he says:

"What you say now and heretofore respecting the remoteness of my writing and thinking from real life, though I hear substantially the same criticism made by my countrymen, I do not know what it means."

Indeed, Emerson's idea of real life differed so profoundly from Carlyle's that their minds seldom met. To him the laws of the universe were not only the great realities, but the most intimate realities. Every person and every action illustrated them. He believed in the principles of democracy which Carlyle scorned. These fundamental differences would have been accentuated in daily intercourse. The visit of the Scotchman to New England never took place, and it was well that it did not; "for," says Emerson, "the higher the style we demand of friendship the less easy to establish it in flesh and blood."

## CHAPTER VII

### I HATE THIS SHALLOW AMERICANISM

*"I hate this shallow Americanism which hopes to get rich by credits, to get knowledge by raps on midnight tables, to learn the economy of mind by phrenology, or skill without study, or mastery without apprenticeship, or sale of goods through pretending they will sell, or power through making believe you are powerful. They think they have got it, but they have got something else."*

A CONTEMPORARY of Emerson was Judge Haliburton of Nova Scotia, the creator of Sam Slick. Mr. Slick of Slickville, Connecticut, was a typical Yankee as seen by neighbors across the northern border. He was shrewd, enterprising, inquisitive, good-humored, and in his way religious. He was an ardent patriot, with his eye on the main chance. He was good at a bargain, and still better at an argument in defense of his rectitude in the transaction. He was no hypocrite, for he saw no reason to pretend to be something

which he was not. He was simply a plain American citizen and he didn't care who knew it. There were thousands in Connecticut just as good as he was. He felt it a privilege to represent the Great Republic.

The blatant Americanism of Sam Slick must be compared with the solid English complacency of Mr. Podsnap. Both were caricatures of national failings which were easily recognizable. Emerson was enough of an American to understand Sam Slick and to laugh with him as well as to laugh at him, but he recognized that this shallow Americanism had its dangers.

The very ease with which the American could make a living made him overestimate his own powers. He took the gifts of nature in a new continent for rewards for his own merit. Bold as he was and self-assertive in little things, he lacked in any standard by which to judge himself. He was gregarious in his mental habits, and curiously averse to strenuous intellectual effort.

"The timidity of our public opinion is our dis-

ease, or shall I say *the publicness* of our opinion, the absence of private opinion. Good nature is plentiful but we want justice with heart of steel to fight down the proud." America has not produced a sufficient number of men who will instinctively throw themselves "on the side of weakness, of youth, of hope; on the liberal, on the expansive side, never on the defensive, the conserving, the timorous, the lock-and-bolt system."

"I find no expression in our State papers or legislative debate in our lyceums or churches, especially in our newspapers, of a high national feeling, no lofty counsels that rightfully stir the blood. I speak of those organs which can be presumed to speak a popular sense. They recommend conventional virtues, whatever will earn and preserve property; always the capitalist, the college, the church, the hospital, the theater, the hotel, the road, the ship, the capitalist, whatever goes to secure, adorn, enlarge these is good; whatever jeopardizes any of these is damnable."

This description of a familiar kind of Americanism in 1844 is easily recognizable in 1920. The shallow reformers are equally familiar.

"Many a reformer perishes in the removal of rubbish, and that makes the offensiveness of this class. They are partial, they are not equal to the work they pretend. They lose their way in the assault on the kingdom of darkness; they expend all their energy on some accidental evil, and lose their sanity and power of benefit. It is of little moment that one or two or twenty errors in our social system be corrected, but of much that the man be in his senses."

No foreign critic has ever pointed out more clearly the faults of the American temperament. But shallow Americanism, with its boastfulness and its conventionality, can not blind him to the ideal America that lies far deeper. It is yet in the making.

"We cannot look on the freedom of this coun-

SAN RAFAEL,
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try, in connection with its youth, without a presentiment that here shall laws and institutions exist on some scale of proportion to the majesty of nature. To men legislating for the area betwixt the two oceans, betwixt the snows and the tropics, somewhat of the grandeur of nature will infuse itself into the code. A heterogeneous population crowding on all ships from all corners of the world to the great gates of North America, namely, Boston, New York, and New Orleans, and thence proceeding inward to the prairie and the mountains, and quickly contributing their private thought to the public opinion, their toll to the treasury, and their vote to the election, it cannot be doubted that the legislation of this country should become more catholic and cosmopolitan than that of any other. It seems so easy for America to inspire and express the most expansive and humane spirit; new-born, free, healthful, strong, the land of the labourer, of the democrat, of the philanthropist, of the believer, of the saint, she should speak for the human race. It is the country of the future. Like Washington,

proverbially 'the city of magnificent distances,' through all its cities, States, and Territories, it is a country of beginnings, of projects, of designs, and expectations.

"Gentlemen, there is a sublime and friendly Destiny by which the human race is guided—the race never dying, the individual never spared—to results affecting masses and ages. Men are narrow and selfish, but the Genius or Destiny is not narrow, but beneficent. It is not discovered in their calculated and voluntary activity, but in what befalls, with or without their design."

Emerson believed as much as the politicians of his day in Manifest Destiny. But he hoped for the country a destiny greater than that which the politicians planned. The commercial progress of the day was something to rejoice in as a part of a great onward movement. But commercialism was not the end toward which the nation was moving.

"Our part is plainly not to throw ourselves across the track, to block improvement, and sit

till we are stone, but to watch the uprise of successive mornings, and to conspire with the work of new days. Government has been a fossil; it should be a plant. I conceive that the office of statute law should be to express, and not to impede the mind of mankind. New thoughts, new things. Trade was one instrument, but Trade is also for a time, and must give way to something broader and better, whose signs are already dawning in the sky."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE POET

*"I am born a poet—of a low class without doubt, but a poet. That is my nature and vocation. My singing, to be sure, is very husky and is for the most part in prose. Still I am a poet in the sense of a perceiver and dear lover of the harmonies that are in the soul and in matter, and specially of the correspondence between them."*

EMERSON'S estimate of his poetical gifts was given in a letter to his future wife. When he so clearly points out his limitations, it seems ungracious to agree with his critical judgment, but one must do so. He was not a poet in the sense of a maker of mighty harmonies. He did not walk like Milton, with his "singing robes" about him. But he was a poet in the sense of being a perceiver and dear lover of natural harmonies, and he made us sharers of his perception.

His singing voice was certainly very husky. Only a few of his poems stand the test of being

read aloud with perfect pleasure. Frequently we are conscious of a metrical jolt. Not only is the ear pained by dissonance, but there is a sense that the poetical inspiration has suddenly given out.

I am inclined to think that Emerson would have been happier if he had frankly adopted "free verse." For though he was a poet, he was not a natural rhymster. In "Merlin" he makes a declaration of independence which would please our new poets.

> "Great is the art
> Great be the manners, of the bard.
> He shall not his brain encumber
> With the coil of rhythm and number."

And then he weakens his declaration by adding:

> "But, leaving rule and pale forethought,
> He shall aye climb
> For his rhyme."

The critic is tempted to ask, Why not let the rhyme go rather than climb for it? Emerson's rhymes were often most unhappy, and had the air of being forced into service.

Read his "May Day." You will find jingling rhymes like

> "Not for a regiment's parade,
> Nor evil laws or rulers made,
> Blue Walden rolls its cannonade."

We have such lines as these:

> "Every tree and stem and chink
> Gushed with syrup to the brink.
> The air stole into the streets of towns,
> Refreshed the wise, reformed the clowns."

After these rhymes that are easy to a fault, we have others that are difficult: as *almanac* and *coming-back, Superior Lake* and *Mackinac, cavaliers* and *travelers.* Sometimes an obsolete word is introduced for the sake of an imperfect rhyme:

> "They shook the snow from hats and shoon,
> They put their April raiment on."

All this needs to be said at the beginning. It is when full allowance is made for his poetical lapses that we are prepared to appreciate Emerson's real poetical gifts. While he had no power

of sustained verbal melody, he has given an unusual number of perfect lines.

In "Voluntaries" we have a succession of commonplace verses, and then come upon the lines that seemed chiseled by some great artist, austerely beautiful and true:

> "So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
> The Youth replies, I can."

In "Forerunners" one would not change a word. There is a gladness of adventure.

"Each and All," "The Problem," "Days," are sources of endless delight. In "Two Rivers," Emerson expresses melodiously his poetical creed. He is a perceiver and dear lover of the correspondence between the outer and the inner worlds. The little river that runs through Concord is the symbol of the eternities.

> "Thy summer voice, Musketaquit,
> Repeats the music of the rain,
> But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
> Through thee, as thou through Concord plain.

"Thou in thy narrow bed art pent,
The stream I love unbounded goes
Through flood and sea and firmament,
Through light, through life, it forward flows."

In the longer poems, like "Monadnock" and "Woodnotes," there is nothing consecutive. One might read them as Emerson himself was accustomed to read, beginning at the last page and turning back the leaves in search of a rewarding sentence. But there is a sparkling atmosphere and a sense of the New England woods and hills.

"'Twas one of the charmed days
When the genius of God doth flow,
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow."

Emerson is the poet of nature, and it is nature as revealed in New England. We see the "twilight parks of beech and pine," and the purple berries, the upland pastures, the delicate mosses, the granite ledges, over which the brooks go tumbling, the mountain lakes "edged with sand and grass," the "damp fields known to bird and fox."

Nowhere is it far to the primitive granite, yet the land is not bare. Even on the ledges "the rope-like pine roots crosswise grown" give a home-like invitation. Nature is everywhere friendly, though there is a trace of austerity about her welcome.

But to the poet the outward forms of nature are but symbols.

> "Give me truths,
> For I am weary of surfaces,
> And die of inanition."

Flashing through woods and mountains and sky, he sees truths that strengthen and inspire. What he seeks to express in his poetry is

> ". . . the sweet affluence of love and song,
> The rich results of the divine consents
> Of man and earth, of world beloved and lover."

Every poet who has any distinctive quality and is not merely an imitator of other poets sees something which he wants to express. This insight is his real contribution. The skill with

which he is able to communicate what he sees is another matter.

The poets of the most universal appeal are those who see what everybody else sees, only more intensely, and who can tell their story in words which every one understands. Robert Burns, Whittier, James Whitcomb Riley, need no interpreters. They themselves are interpreting what we have already experienced.

There are other poets whose endeavor is to make us see something which, without their help, we might miss, or at least treat as something unpoetical. Browning saw a greater complexity in human conduct and character than we usually recognize, and he sought to present this complexity to the imagination as well as to the reason. This involved a good deal of explanation on his part, and explanatory remarks are always prose. But the true Browning lover knows what his poet is driving at and helps him out when he gets into difficulties.

Walt Whitman saw the poetry which is in mere bulk and the sublimity that is in great bare spaces.

Let others sing of the finished products of art and nature; he would celebrate the glory of the imperfect, the romance of the raw material. To his mind a catalogue of the most ordinary things was suggestive. It was the stuff poems are made of. It was an inventory of the wealth we hold in common. He repeats the names of American states and cities as Milton repeated the names of the places old in story, which in his imagination stood for all sorts of vague sublimities. If we catch something of this imaginative enthusiasm for crude bulk and wide spaces and overflowing vitality, then we greet Whitman as a great poet. Otherwise, we make nothing of him. "There are in the world," says Paul, "many kinds of voices, and no voice is without its significance." But he adds, if we do not understand the person who is talking, he is a barbarian to us and we are as barbarians to him.

The poetry of Emerson has a quality growing out of a peculiar way of looking at things. Whitman saw things in the rough. "Here is what moves in magnificent masses, careless of particu-

lars." Emerson saw the motion of masses, but he was not careless of particulars. His attention was fixed not upon the mass but on the particles of which it was composed. And his quick eye perceived that these particles had each a motion of its own, and that the motion was bewilderingly rapid.

Our dull eyes see results but not processes. We talk of the quickness of thought, but we are really very slow-witted creatures and seldom see what is going on. The things which we watch and talk about are really the things which have already happened, just as we may be looking at a star by light, which only tells us that it was shining some centuries ago. Our judgment on what we call current events is apt to be misleading because it is not strictly contemporaneous.

The great illusion is that of arrested motion. Things seem to us to stand still, which in reality are whirling about with inconceivable velocity. Our sciences have demonstrated what our senses can not perceive, and that which staggers our imagination.

The astronomer tells us of the way this earthen ball on which we live goes hurtling through space. But even the astronomer does not feel the motion. The chemist tells us of the wild dances of the molecules. We in a dull way perceive the fact of growth and decay and attraction and repulsion, but we do not perceive them as incessantly happening. When a powder mill is destroyed, we are startled by the explosion. But of the multitude of tiny explosions, which result in the opening of a rose, or the scattering of thistledown, we are unconscious.

Now Emerson was profoundly stirred by thought of the explosive power of nature. Indeed his world was always exploding. He attempts to express the sense of these sudden happenings in his poetry. He is preeminently the poet of swift motion.

"Hearken! Hearken!
If thou wouldst know the mystic song
Chanted when the sphere was young.
Aloft, abroad, the pæan swells;
O wise man! hear'st thou half it tells?

O wise man! hear'st thou the least part?
'Tis the chronicle of art.
To the open air it sings
Sweet the genesis of things,
Of tendency through endless ages,
Of star dust, and star-pilgrimages,
Of rounded worlds, of space and time,
Of the old flood's subsiding slime,
Of chemic matter, force and form,
Of poles and powers, cold, wet and warm:
The rushing metamorphosis
Dissolving all that fixture is,
Melts things that be to things that seem,
And solid nature to a dream.
O, listen to the undersong,
The ever old, the ever young;
And, far within the cadent pauses,
The chorus of the ancient Causes!"

This was the theme of Emerson's poetry. It was the genesis of things as revealed by modern science and interpreted by the poetic imagination. He was the poet of the "rushing metamorphosis."

It was a world in which there was persistent force and ever-changing form. The world soul cries,

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"Hearken once more!
I will tell thee the mundane lore.
Older am I than thy numbers wot,
Change I may, but I pass not.
Hitherto all things fast abide,
And anchored in the tempest ride.
Trenchant Time behooves to hurry
All to yean and all to bury:
All the forms are fugitive,
But the substances survive."

And that calm for which philosophers have always yearned, how shall we attain it? Not by standing still, seeking refuge in some venerable form, but by flinging ourselves into the swift current, and yielding ourselves to the eternal power.

It is possible for a man's thought to keep step with nature "with triumphant piercing sight," seeing the end toward which all things move.

"On him the light of star and moon
Shall fall with purer radiance down;
All constellations of the sky
Shed their virtue through his eye,
Him Nature giveth for defence
His formidable innocence;
The mounting sap, the shells, the sea,
All spheres, all stones his helpers be.

He shall never be old
Nor his fate shall be foretold;
He shall meet the speeding year
Without wailing, without fear."

The Actual is swift, but the Ideal is swifter.

"Thee gliding through a sea of form,
Like the lightning through a storm,
Somewhat not to be possessed,
Somewhat not to be caressed,
No feet so fleet could ever find,
No perfect form could ever bind,
Thou eternal fugitive,
Hovering over all that live,
Quick and skilful to inspire
Sweet, extravagant desire."

There are poems of Emerson which we can make nothing of unless we have happened to brood over the same problems. There is "Initial, Dæmonic and Celestial Love." It is unreadable, unless one reads between the lines.

When we ask what it is all about? the answer is that it is an attempt to follow that "rushing metamorphosis" that we call love. Under one name we speak of the attraction of sex which

man shares with all the animal world, and the highest and most disinterested affections. Here is a passion in its beginning sensuous and selfish, capable of infinite refinement till it becomes purely spiritual. Between love as a natural impulse and love as a religious experience there are innumerable subtle gradations. Emerson's lines suggest the swiftness of the transitions.

At first love is unmoral.

> "He is wilful, mutable,
> Shy, untamed, inscrutable,
> Swifter-fashioned than the fairies.
> * * *
> For Cupid goes behind all law.
>
> "There are impulses that are
> Restless, predatory, hasting;
> And they pounce on other eyes
> As lions on their prey.
> And round their circles is writ
> Plainer than the day,
> Underneath, within, above,—
> Love—love—love—love."

Out of these primitive instincts arise the higher kinds of love. They do not develop in logical

order. They are rather fierce and sudden passions which, however, tend toward nobleness.

> "Man was made of social earth,
> Child and brother from his birth,
> Tethered by a liquid cord
> Of blood through veins of kindred
> poured."

There is developed a loyalty to family and tribe. There come "throbs of a wild religion." There is

> "Beauty of a richer vein
> Graces of a subtler strain."

After a time love is drawn to its object, not by a blind urgency, but a conscious choice. The lover is open-eyed.

> "He doth elect
> The beautiful and fortunate,
> And the sons of intellect,
> And the souls of ample fate,
> Who the Future's gate unbar."

But this love with all its possibilities of

chivalry and romance is at heart selfish. It seeks its own, and scorns all else.

> "The Dæmons are self-seeking,
> Their fierce and limitary will
> Draws men to their likeness still."

There is a love that "delights to build a road," but "the Dæmon ever builds a wall." That impulse which unites is met by an impulse which divides. So it happens that

> "Ever the Dæmonic love
> Is the ancestor of wars."

But these partial preferences and passions do not exhaust the meaning of love. There is a celestial love.

> "But God said,
> 'I will have a purer gift,
> There is smoke in the flame.' "

There is a love that is one with justice and truth. It is a passion still, but it is a passion for perfection. It comes with insight of a swifter kind.

"Thou must mount for love
Into vision where all form
In one only form dissolves.
* * *
"Pray for a beam
Out of that sphere,
Thee to guide and to redeem.
O, what a load of care and toil,
By lying use bestowed,
From his shoulders falls who sees
The true astronomy."

The love of the one becomes the symbol of good-will to all.

"Not glad, as the low-loving herd,
Of self in other still preferred,
But they have heartily designed
The benefit of broad mankind.
And they serve men austerely,
After their own genius, clearly,
Without a false humility;
For this is Love's nobility,—
Not to scatter bread and gold,
Goods and raiment bought and sold:
But to hold fast his simple sense,
And speak the speech of innocence,
And with hand, and body, and blood,
To make his bosom-counsel good.
For he that feeds men serveth few;
He serves all who dares be true."

In all this Emerson is expressing his philosophy. But he does it not as a formal teacher, but as a poet.

In the "Threnody," in which he sought comfort after the death of a dearly loved child, there is the same sense of the quick transitions between the physical and the spiritual. He summons his faltering thought to follow his boy into the vast regions of the unknown. It is not a void but full of possibilities of life.

> "When frail Nature can no more,
> Then the Spirit strikes the hour:
> My servant Death, with solving rite,
> Pours finite into infinite."

The loved form disappears, but the love goes on in search of its object. Change their must be, but change does not mean destruction of real values. Emerson finds strength in the thought that what is "excellent is permanent." And that permanence is not of form but of force.

> "Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow,
> Whose streams through nature circling go?

Nail the wild star to its track
On the half-climbed zodiac?
Light is light which radiates,
Blood is blood which circulates,
Life is life which generates,
And many-seeming life is one,—
Wilt thou transfix and make it none?
Its onward force too starkly pent
In figure, bone, and lineament?
Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,
Talker! the unreplying Fate?
Nor see the genius of the whole
Ascendant in the private soul,
Beckon it when to go and come,
Self-announced its hour of doom?
Fair the soul's recess and shrine,
Magic-built to last a season;
Masterpiece of love benign
Fairer that expansive reason
Whose omen 'tis, and sign.
Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know
What rainbows teach, and sunsets show?
Verdict which accumulates
From lengthening scroll of human fates,
Voice of earth to earth returned,
Prayers of saints that inly burned,—
Saying, What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain,
Heart's love will meet thee again

Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye
Up to his style, and manners of the sky.
Not of adamant and gold
Built he heaven stark and cold;
No, but a nest of bending reeds,
Flowering grass, and scented weeds;
Or like a traveller's fleeing tent,
Or bow above the tempest bent;
Built of tears and sacred flames,
And virtue reaching to its aims;
Built of furtherance and pursuing,
Not of spent deeds, but of doing.
Silent rushes the swift Lord
Through ruined systems still restored,
Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
Plants with worlds the wilderness;
Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.
House and tenant go to ground,
Lost in God, in Godhead found."

# CHAPTER IX

## THE POETRY OF SCIENCE

*"Science always goes abreast with the just elevation of the man keeping step with religion and metaphysics; or the state of science is an index of self-knowledge. Since everything in Nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark it is because the corresponding faculty in the observer is not yet active."*

EMERSON'S idea of the scientific intelligence keeping step with the moral and spiritual faculties is an illuminating one. It suggests to us what happened in the nineteenth century, and gave rise to so much confusion.

The orderly progress of the human mind was broken up by the sudden and unprecedented advance of the physical sciences. In a single generation knowledge advanced with great leaps, which carried it into regions which had never before been entered. There was a penetrating power in the scientific method which amazed those who

used it. The geologist, the chemist, the biologist, were daily enlarging the sphere of knowledge. Political economists were claiming the whole sphere of morals as their own.

But all this progress was one-sided. Was the advance of scientific knowledge only another name for disenchantment? Was the bloom of the world to be brushed off, never more to return? The poets and the artists and idealistic moralists were panic-stricken. Those who picture the mood of the so-called Victorian Age as one of smug complacency forget the predominant feeling of its men of literary and artistic genius. Ruskin, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold agree in lamenting the fact that "knowledge comes but wisdom lingers." A glory had departed from the world. We are in danger, they thought, of knowing too much.

Matthew Arnold voiced this despondent mood in his poem, "The Future." Man was born in a boat that floats upon the River of Time. At the beginning it was a clear flowing mountain stream,

and looking out upon the romantic mountains the voyager's heart was full of joy.

> "As is the world on the banks
> So is the mind of the man."

Our fathers lived in a world of poetry. Life to them was simple but full of mystery. It was easy to believe and wonder and enjoy. But the tract which the River of Time now flows through is the level plain, bordered by cities, crowded with traffic. Our world is prosaic, and we must adapt ourselves to it as best we may. All that remains is a melancholy resignation.

It was against this mood of depression that Emerson always protested. The man of science, he says, does not divest the world of mystery. He does not "explain away" anything. His explanations are but the translating one mystery into another. His knowledge is never final. It reveals deep behind deep.

The trouble is with ourselves. We allow our imagination to grow torpid. In the processes of

nature are the materials not only for scientific investigation, but for poetry also. An evolving universe is a theme that can never be exhausted.

Emerson had not the equipment of the man of science, but he had the imagination which sympathized with the tendencies of scientific investigation. It seemed to him that they were confirmations of the intuition of the poets. That matter is not dead but thrilling with energy; that space is not empty but is the medium through which forces operate; that all things are related; that lower forms of life are always reaching out toward that which is higher; that there is a tendency for the organism to grow more complex and therefore more wonderful,—these were discoveries that ought to kindle the poetic imagination.

Emerson did not flatter himself that he had the ability to express the new view of the universe. The new poetry he believed would be realistic without losing its charm.

"For it is dislocation and detachment from the

life of God that makes things ugly. The poet who reattaches things to nature and the whole—reattaching even artificial things and violations of nature to nature by a deeper insight—disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts."

That to the true poet all things are poetical was a teaching that he repeats continually. It was this belief that made him greet Walt Whitman with such effusion. When in 1855 the "Leaves of Grass" appeared, the literary world was affronted. Whittier, it is said, threw his presentation copy into the fire. Emerson, almost alone in his recognition of the new note, wrote,

"I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things, said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can give. I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

But when Walt, in the exuberance of joy over the appreciation, published a new edition with

Emerson's commendation printed on the cover, the Concord poet was displeased. There were later interviews, but each man became conscious of the limitations of the other. "I was simmering, simmering, simmering," said Whitman, "and Emerson brought me to boil." Emerson approved the ideas which were simmering in the younger poet's mind, but when they actually boiled over he was inclined to get out of the way. This was not mere fastidiousness. It indicated a different conclusion drawn from what lawyers call "agreed facts." Walt Whitman expresses the creed of Emerson in his "Song of the Universal:"

"Come, said the Muse,
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,
Sing me the Universal.

"In this broad earth of ours
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart
Nestles the seed perfection.

"By every life a share or more or less,
None born but it is born concealed or
Unconcealed the seed is waiting.

"Over the mountain growths, disease and sorrow,
An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,
High in the purer happier air.

"From imperfection's murkiest cloud
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
One flash of heaven's glory.

"To fashion's, custom's discords,
To the mad Babel din, the deafening orgies,
Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard,
From some far shore the final chorus sounding.

"O the blest eyes, the happy hearts,
That see, that know the guiding thread so fine
Along the mighty labyrinth."

That spiritual realities are wrapped up in the material world, and that the seed of perfection may be found amid the apparent grossness of the earth, was a creed, which both poets fervently believed. But what had it to do with the poet's art?

Whitman, in his robust faith that goodness was universal, felt relieved from the responsibility of choice. Nature had invited him to a feast of good things. He would take pot luck, and enjoy the rude plenty. This he conceived

to be the very essence of democracy. He would take good things in the bulk.

Emerson also chanted the praise of the universal, but with a somewhat different emphasis. He was interested in the grossness and the slag only for the sake of the seed perfection that lay hidden in it. It is the uncaught bird that flies above the mountain, it is the ray of perfect light that now and then flashes through the murky clouds, that must be the theme of poetry. The poet must follow the guiding thread or he is lost in the labyrinth. There must be discrimination. Nature has something more than fecundity. There is an austere rejection of the lower forms of life in favor of the higher. There is a continual refinement going on. To interpret this side of nature is the function of art. In this discrimination he was in harmony with the scientific attitude.

The man of science does not yield to an idle curiosity. He selects the objects of his study and the method to be used. The laboratory is not cluttered up with all the objects which a naturalist

might encounter in his walks. Only such objects as are fitted for the purpose are selected. Should not the poet exercise the same kind of discrimination?

Whitman tells us how on Beacon Street in Boston he walked with Emerson for two hours, discussing their agreements and differences.

"During these two hours he was the talker and I the listener. It was an argument,—statement, reconnoitering, review, attack and pressing home against all that could be said against my poems,—Children of Adam. Emerson's statement was unanswerable, no judge's charge ever more complete or convincing. I could never hear the points better put,—and then I felt down in my soul the clear and unmistakable conviction to disobey all, and pursue my own way."

As between Emerson and Whitman as poets, it is not necessary for us to decide. Both stood in the presence of nature. Whitman delighted in its obvious aspects, its sheer bulk, its prodi-

gality, its endless variety. Emerson was more interested in the laws which it illustrated and the unseen forces which move it. He was listening to the "chorus of the ancient causes." This is what made his words so precious to the men of science who in the nineteenth century were waging a battle against ancient formulas which obscured the meaning of their researches.

Professor Tyndall, in his famous address to the British Association in 1870, took his text from Emerson, to whom in many other places he acknowledged his indebtedness. His theme was "The Scientific Use of the Imagination," and he began by repeating Emerson's lines which I have already quoted, beginning:

> "If thou wouldst know the mystic song
> Chanted when the sphere was young."

Here, he said, is the poetic expression of the spirit of modern science.

In another essay, Professor Tyndall denies the common notion that advances in science are made simply by the patient pushing out of boundaries

of knowledge according to a prosaic system. Beyond the region of actual light where facts are clearly seen, there is a penumbral region. Here is a field where intuition goes in advance of knowledge. "Here the investigator proceeds by combining intuition and verification. He ponders the knowledge he possesses and tries to push it further; he guesses and checks his guess, he conjectures and confirms or rejects his conjecture. . . . Thus the vocation of the true experimentalist may be defined as the continued use of spiritual insight, and its incessant correction and realization. His experiments constitute a body of which his purified intuitions are as it were the soul."

Those "purified intuitions," which Tyndall declares constituted the very soul of science, were to Emerson the essence of poetry. What the scientist discovered to be true, the poet saw to be beautiful. Both recognized the fact that nature was not fixed but fluid. We see the successive phases of an endless genesis.

"The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says,—he is my creature, and maugre all his imperfect griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun of the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow-puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is

always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental; to be brothers, to be acquaintances,—master or servant is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am a lover of uncontained and immortal beauty."

## CHAPTER X

### PIETY

*"We love the venerable house*
*Our fathers built to God;—*
*In heaven are kept their grateful vows,*
*Their dust endears the sod.*

*"Here holy thoughts a light have shed*
*From many a radiant face,*
*And prayers of humble virtue made*
*The perfume of the place.*

*"And anxious hearts have pondered here*
*The mystery of life,*
*And prayed the eternal Light to clear*
*Their doubts, and aid their strife.*

*"From humble tenements around*
*Came up the pensive train,*
*And in the church a blessing found*
*That filled their homes again;*

*"For faith and peace and mighty love*
*That from the Godhead flow,*
*Showed them the life of Heaven above*
*Springs from the life below.*

*"They live with God; their homes are dust;*
*Yet here their children pray,*
*And in this fleeting lifetime trust*
*To find the narrow way.*

*"On him who by the altar stands,*
*On him thy blessing fall,*
*Speak through his lips thy pure commands,*
*Thou heart that lovest all."*

AMONG the strange adventures of words, which are continually losing their original meanings and taking up with new associations, there is none stranger than that of the word Piety. To the Romans it was preeminently a manly virtue. There was no suggestion of weakness about it. It represented the behavior of the strong man toward his parents, kinsmen, country or benefactors. It implied a fine courtesy and a sense of the fitness of things. There was a sober affection for all that was permanent in human relations. Antoninus Pius represented the kind of loyalty which the Romans most admired.

It is this piety in the ancient sense which Emerson's hymn represents. It is the very opposite of conventional pietism. To him the New England

meeting-house was venerable, because of its associations with what was most sacred and enduring in the life of his own people. Whittier himself has not expressed more tenderly his appreciation of the personal influences which have bound the generations together in common worship.

The same note is sounded in the hymn sung at the completion of the Concord Monument, April 19, 1836.

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

"The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

"On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

"Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and Thee."

In the lines entitled "Grace" there is a recognition of the debt which the individual owes to the society of which he is a part, and by which he is protected.

"How much, preventing God, how much I owe
To the defences thou hast round me set;
Example, custom, fear, occasion slow,—
These scorned bondmen were my parapet.
I dare not peep over this parapet
To gauge which glance the roaring gulf below,
The depth of sin to which I had descended
Had not these me against myself defended."

In considering the individualism of Emerson we have to take account of the fact that he never really broke with the past, nor did he consider it necessary to do so in order to achieve freedom. He acknowledged his indebtedness to those who had gone before him. But his reverence for their example led him not to stand perpetually where they stood; but rather to go on in the same direction in which they were going.

All who heard Emerson in the pulpit bear witness to the atmosphere of reverence which per-

vaded his utterances. One who listened to him writes:

"One day there came into our pulpit the most gracious of mortals with a face all benignity who gave out the first hymn and made the first prayer as an angel might have read or prayed. Our choir was a pretty good one, but its best was coarse and discordant after Emerson's voice. I remember the sermon only that it had an indefinite charm of simplicity and wisdom, with occasional illustrations from Nature, which were about the most delicate and dainty things of the kind I had ever heard. I could understand them, if not the fresh philosophical novelties of the discourse."

Emerson was remarkably incurious in regard to the problems propounded by formal theologians, but he was a profound believer in the religion of experience. Piety, whether manifest toward God or man, was something altogether natural.

"Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person, who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable. It inspires awe and astonishment. How dear, how soothing to man, arises the idea of God, peopling the lonely place, effacing the scars of our mistakes and disappointments! When we have broken our god of tradition, and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with His presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself, nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side. It inspires in man an infallible trust. He has not the conviction, but the sight, that the best is the true, and may in that thought easily dismiss all particular uncertainties and fears, and adjourn to the sure revelation of time, the solution of his private riddles. He is sure that his welfare is dear to the heart of being. In the presence of law to his mind, he is overflowed with a reliance so universal that it sweeps away all cherished

hopes and the most stable projects of mortal condition in its flood. He believes that he cannot escape from his good. The things that are really for thee gravitate to thee. You are running to seek your friend. Let your feet run, but your mind need not. If you do not find him, will you not acquiesce that it is best that you should not find him? for there is a power, which, as it is in you, is in him also, and could therefore very well bring you together, if it were for the best. You are preparing with eagerness to go and render a service to which your talent and your taste invite you, the love of men and the hope of fame. Has it not occurred to you that you have no right to go unless you are equally willing to be prevented from going? O, believe, as thou livest, that every sound that is spoken over the round world, which thou ought to hear, will vibrate on thine ear! Every proverb, every book, every by-word that belongs to thee for aid or comfort, shall surely come home through open or winding passages. Every friend whom not thy fantastic will, but the great and tender heart in thee crav-

eth, shall lock thee in his embrace. And this, because the heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one."

## CHAPTER XI

### THOU SHALT NOT PREACH

*" 'A new commandment,' said the smiling Muse,*
*'I give my darling son, Thou shalt not preach.' "*

IN one sense Emerson was always a preacher. His main interest was in the moral law and in the development of character. When he left the pulpit for the lecture platform he was only changing one congregation for another. In the Unitarian ministry to which he belonged, the sermon and the essay were not always clearly differentiated.

But in another sense Emerson obeyed the prohibition of the smiling muse. He had no genius for exhortation, nor had he any desire to enforce his precepts upon unwilling minds. He lacked the fervor of the true evangelist, and could not cry, "Turn ye! turn ye! why will ye die?" He

could not enforce the gospel of liberalism as did his friend, Theodore Parker. His attitude was like that of the man of science to the subject of his investigation. "Here is the truth as I see it. Now investigate it for yourselves and see what you think of it."

In the Divinity School address, Emerson startled his hearers by a bold prophecy.

"I look for the hour when that supreme Beauty which ravished the soul of these Eastern men, and chiefly of those Hebrews, and through their lips spake oracles to all time, shall speak in the West also. The Hebrew and the Greek scriptures contain immortal sentences that have been the bread of life to millions. But they have no epical integrity, are fragmentary, are not shown in their order to the intellect. I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far these shining laws that he shall see them come round full circle; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul, shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the

Ought, that Duty is one thing with Science, with Beauty and Joy."

"Virtue is vitiated," said Emerson, "by too much will. He who aims at progress should aim at an infinite not at a special benefit. The reforms whose fame now fills the land with Temperance, Anti-slavery, Non-Resistance, no Government, Equal Labor, fair and generous as each appears, are poor, bitter things when prosecuted for themselves as an end. . . . The soul can be appeased not by a deed, but by a tendency."

The born preacher appeals to the will and seeks to change its direction. He pleads and threatens. He is instant in season and out of season. Only on a few great occasions did Emerson adopt that tone. The greatest truths seemed to him to be self-evidencing. In their presence all minds were equal. "The weight of the universe is pressed down on the shoulders of each moral agent to hold him to his task."

"Let us have nothing now but what is its own evidence. There is surely enough for the heart

in the religion itself. Let us not be pestered with half-truths and assertion and snuffle.

"There will be a new church founded on moral science, at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come, without shawms, or psaltery, or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry. Was never stoicism so stern and exigent as this shall be. It shall send man home to his central solitude, shame these social, supplicating manners, and make him know that much of the time he must have himself to his friend. He shall expect no cooperation, he shall walk with no companion. The nameless Thought, the nameless Power, the super-personal Heart,—he shall repose alone on that. He needs only his own verdict. No good fame can help, no bad fame can hurt him. The Laws are his consolers, the good Laws themselves are alive, they know if we have kept them, they animate him with the leading of great duty and

an endless horizon. Honor and fortune exist to him who always recognizes the neighborhood of the great, always feels himself in the presence of high causes."

To all this the preacher might answer, "You have left out of your account something which is very important in human nature, namely, its weakness. The ordinary man lives amid the wonders of nature, but he may be very little affected by them. He needs some strong voice to urge him to open his eyes to what is around him. If it is so with the most obvious sights, is it not more so with moral and spiritual beauty? Is not the preacher needed as well as the philosopher and poet?"

No one would be more willing to acknowledge this than Emerson. His criticism of Plato would be equally true of himself.

"Plato, lover of limits, loved the illimitable, saw the enlargement and nobility that came from truth itself and good itself, and attempted as if on the part of the human intellect to do it ade-

quate homage. . . . It remains to say that the defect of Plato in power is only that which results inevitably from his quality. He is intellectual in his aim, and therefore in expression literary. Mounting into heaven, diving into the pit, expounding the laws of the state, the passion of love, the remorse of crime, the hope of the parting soul, he is literary and never otherwise. It is almost the sole deduction from Plato that his writings have not—what is no doubt incident to this regnancy of intellect in his work—the vital authority which the screams of the prophets and the sermons of unlettered Arabs and Jews possess. There is an interval; and to cohesion contact is necessary. . . . I know not what can be said in reply to this criticism but that we have come to a fact in the nature of things; an oak is not an orange. The qualities of sugar remain with sugar, and those of salt with salt."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LURE OF THE WEST

*"If I had a pocket full of money I think I should go down the Ohio and up and down the Mississippi by way of antidote to what small remains of Orientalism (so endemic in these parts) there may still be in me—to cast out, I mean, the passion for Europe, by the passion for America; and our reverence for Cambridge, which is only a part of our reverence for London, must be transferred across the Alleghany ridge."*—EMERSON TO MARGARET FULLER.

NEW England has always been the home of an intense patriotism. The spirit of Bunker Hill and Lexington has never been quenched. Nor can it be said that any part of the country has sent out more men who have taken part in an effective way in large national enterprises.

Yet in the days before the Civil War, when Boston became conscious of itself as a literary center, it was open to the charge of not having

yet discovered America. It belonged to a New England that still looked to Old England for its models. This, I take it, was always true more of the literary circles than of the mass of the people, but it was that which determined the admiration of those who aspired to "culture." As Daniel in Babylon prayed with his windows opened toward Jerusalem, so the Boston literati, when they took pen in hand, wrote with their study windows open toward London. As to what was happening in the great hinterland beyond the Hudson, they cared little. And the people in the hinterland, who were so busy opening up the resources of the continent that they hadn't time to be literary, resented in a good-natured way the Bostonian attitude. It had that "certain condescension" which Lowell resented on the part of Europeans, but from which he and his friends were not altogether free when they encountered the representative men of the West.

I think it is fair to say that Emerson did more than any one else to redeem the New England group of authors from the kind of provincialism

which was their darling sin. He did it in a two-fold way: first, by attacking their imitation of things English, and then by inculcating a hearty admiration for the America that was growing up in the West.

In "English Traits" he pays tribute to the sturdy virtues of the English character and the wealth of English talent. But he insists on treating England not as the Mother Country, but as a different country,—as different as France or Italy. He admires it, but it is with a critical detachment. Hawthorne wrote of England as The Old Home. Emerson had very little of the Old Home idea. There were ties of deep friendship, but he recognized that the genius of Britain and the genius of America were different. He admired the differences.

"The wealth of the source is seen in the plenitude of English nature. What variety of power and talent, what facility and plenteousness of knighthood, lordship, ladyship, royalty, loyalty; what a proud chivalry is indicated in 'Collin's

peerage' through eight hundred years. What dignity resting on what reality and stoutness. What courage in war, what sinew in labor, what cunning unknown, what inventors and engineers, what seamen and pilots, what clerks and scholars."

But this admiration has nothing in it of the provincial's attitude to the greatness and privilege of those who belong to the capital. Had one said, "Go thou and do and be likewise," Emerson would not have budged an inch. His attitude toward the sturdy Englishman would be like his attitude toward the Churchman:

> "I like a church, I like a cowl,
> I love a prophet of the soul,
> . . . . . .
> Yet not for all his faith can see
> Would I that cowlèd churchman be."

Emerson had an admiration for the true-born Englishman, but not for the anglicized American. He believed in culture, but there must be an American culture that must grow out of the

conditions of our own life. In his lines entitled "Culture" he defined the cultivated man as one who

> "To his native center fast,
> Shall into Future fuse the Past,
> And the world's flowing fates in his own mould recast."

And when he thought of the world's flowing fates, his mind turned westward. There great things were happening. A new civilization was being created. There was nothing condescending in the attitude of the thinker to these men of action, who on an unparalleled stage were beginning a new act.

Against the fastidious critics of Boston, Emerson defends the rough and ready men of the West, who were already making their influences felt in politics.

"As long as our people quote English standards, they dwarf their own proportions. A Western lawyer of eminence said to me he wished it were a penal offence to bring an English lawbook into court in this country, so pernicious had he found

in his experience our deference to English precedent. The very word commerce has only an English meaning and is pinched to the cramp exigencies of English experience. The commerce of rivers, the commerce of railroads, and who knows but the commerce of air balloons must give an American extension to the pond-hole of admiralty. As long as our people quote English standards, they will miss the sovereignty of power."

Even before the Civil War Emerson discerned clearly the significance of the Middle West and the great part it was destined to play in the development of civilization. The old thirteen states had a tradition that was essentially British. The great states which had been established in the Mississippi valley were in their origin purely American. There was no colonial background to their history. Here the pioneer spirit had developed freely. It was the spirit of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett and Peter Cartwright.

Emerson reminds his fastidious friends that there is an explosive energy in young America.

"Men of this surcharge of arterial blood cannot live on nuts and herb tea and elegies, cannot read novels and play whist, cannot satisfy all their wants at the Thursday lecture or the Boston Athenæum. They pine for adventure, and must go to Pikes Peak, had rather die of the hatchet of a Pawnee than sit all day and every day at a counting-room desk. They are made for war, for the sea, for mining, hunting and clearing, for hairbreadth adventures, huge risks and adventurous living. . . . Their friends and governors must see that some vent for their explosive complexion is provided. The roisterers who are destined for infamy at home will cover you with glory and come back heroes and generals. There are Oregons, Californias and exploring expeditions enough appertaining to America to find them in files to gnaw and crocodiles to eat."

Emerson could not satisfy all his wants in the Boston Athenæum or the Saturday Club. Every year he escaped from his neighbors for a lecture

tour in the West. It was before the days of the Pullman car, and traveling in interior America meant roughing it.

He did not put on any airs as a missionary of culture. He could not make a living as a writer of books. He must earn something as an itinerant lecturer.

"It comes to this. I'll bet you fifty dollars a day for three weeks that you will not leave your library and wade and freeze and ride and run, and suffer all manner of indignities, and stand up for an hour every night reading in a hall! I bet I will. I do it and win the nine hundred dollars."

The ways of the lecturer were not always pleasant. "Two nights in a rail car and a third on the floor of a canal boat, where the cushion allowed me for a bed was crossed at the knees by another tier of sleepers as long-limbed as I, so that the air was a wreath of legs."

In 1853 he writes from Springfield, Illinois, "Here I am in the deep mud of the prairies. It

rains and thaws incessantly and if we step off a short street we go up to the shoulders perhaps in mud. My chamber is a cabin, my fellow-boarders are legislators. Two or three governors or ex-governors live in the house. But in the prairie we are all new men, and must not stand on trifles."

In mid-winter he makes this entry in his journal: "My chief adventure was the necessity of riding in a buggy forty-eight miles to Grand Rapids; then after lecture twenty more in return, and the next morning back to Kalamazoo in time for the train hither at twelve." This was at a time when Kalamazoo was a name strange to Bostonian ears.

It was not comfortable traveling through blizzards to discourse to audiences which gathered in chilly or stuffy halls, but it was interesting. "Here is America in the making, America in the raw. But it does not want much to go to lecture, and 'tis a pity to drive it."

It is only fair to add that Emerson's appreciation of the new West was intellectual rather than

intimately social. He saw it in the large, and treated it in a symbolic way. He saw the significance of the western man's boastfulness over the growth of the country. He liked to watch towns grow. He would have delighted in the Chicago man's remark that when Chicago turned to culture it would make culture hum. That was after Emerson's own heart, and it was that spirit which he wished to infuse into his well-beloved Boston.

In 1839 he writes, "It is a sort of maxim with me never to harp on the omnipotence of limitations. Least of all do we need any suggestion of checks and measures, as if New England were anything else. . . . Our virtue runs in a narrow rill, we have never a freshet. One would like to see Boston and Massachusetts agitated like a wave with some generosity, mad for learning, for music, for philanthropy, for freedom, for art. We have insight and sensibility enough if we had constitution enough."

The old Puritan capital of Massachusetts has become a great cosmopolitan city, and what were

then raw towns of the West are to-day making culture hum, but it is interesting to read Emerson's judgments. He insisted that the rough work which the pioneers were doing, clearing the forest, building railroads, laying out cities and incidentally speculating in corner lots did not indicate that they were materialistic. They were idealists of an heroic sort. They were big men doing big things. The amenities would come in time. The fierce energy with which they did their work would be turned at length to the finer arts. He greeted them as the makers of a new civilization. The men of the West knew all this before. But they were glad to have Mr. Emerson come out and confirm them in their splendid anticipations.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EMERSON'S ELUSIVE SMILE

*"Uprose the merry Sphinx*
*And crouched no more in stone."*

IT was only the accident of local contiguity that made Doctor Holmes attempt a biography of Emerson. The men were altogether unlike, and their minds seldom met. Emerson's mysticism was to Holmes an intellectual frailty to be covered over by a friendly apology. But the doctor, though averse to transcendentalism, was a good judge of wit and humor. He tells us that no one can fully appreciate Emerson who has not seen the quick smile with which he read passages which his sober-minded disciples took as oracles to be pondered, while to him they were flashes of wit.

Emerson certainly had wit, but he was not witty in the ordinary sense, nor did he really

enjoy the broader kinds of humor. He tells us how he went with little Waldo to the circus and they enjoyed themselves hugely till the clown came out to perform his antics. Waldo whispered, "The funny man makes me want to go home." His father adds that he was of his opinion. It was a sore trial to him, therefore, when in his lectures he was sometimes expected to play the funny man. In preparing them for the press he, to the disappointment of some of his friends, cut out the enlivening anecdotes which his more austere taste disapproved.

Play of wit there was, but it was a game of solitaire. The great wits like Sidney Smith need antagonists and spectators for their play. Theirs is the quick give and take, or the unexpected word that sets the table in a roar. Emerson, as we have seen, was strangely deficient in conversational aptitude, and had no power of repartee. He complains of the way in which he was put down by clever talkers. "A snipper snapper eats me whole."

Many of those who had been attracted by his

writings were disappointed when they came to him to talk over the subjects which he had suggested. They found it hard to get at him. Henry James, the elder, declares that he knew of no one "whose conversation was less remunerative."

Emerson's wit was, to use William Penn's phrase, "the fruit of solitude." It was produced by collisions of thought that took place in his own mind, these happenings having no particular relation to time or place. They are "the smile of reason" over the incongruities developed in the course of human reasoning.

It was a part of Emerson's philosophy. To him the man thinking was like a schoolboy with lexicon and grammar trying to read a Latin classic. It is hard work, and the schoolboy frowns as he bends to the task. The frown indicates his grim determination, which is a good sign. He is making hard work of it, will learn the lesson in time. But his serious demeanor indicates also that he does not yet know the meaning of the words he is painfully puzzling over. For they were written in lighter vein and contain a

merry jest. When the meaning flashes forth, the words are forgotten, and the boy smiles understandingly.

Emerson's quick but illusive smile came when he perceived the meaning of something which had seemed to be meaningless. The riddle of existence seems to most men the cause of futile effort to understand. The sphinx is a very solemn character indeed. To Emerson the mystery was not a cause of complaint. He suspected the sphinx of practical jokes. She was concealing something from us.

> "I heard a poet answer
> Aloud and cheerfully,
> 'Say on, sweet Sphinx! thy dirges
> Are pleasant songs to me.
> Deep love lieth under
> These pictures of time;
> That fade in the light of
> Their meaning sublime.'"

When thus challenged

> "The old Sphinx bit her thick lip,—
> Said, 'Who taught thee me to name?
> I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow,
> Of thine eye I am eyebeam.'"

Then the frowning face gave way to a smile, and "up rose the merry sphinx and crouched no more in stone."

The conception of a "merry sphinx" is deliciously Emersonian. The tables are turned upon the bitter satirist. The satirist smiles when he sees the incongruity between what men expect and what they actually receive, between what they profess to be and what they are. In all this it is assumed that the reality is worse than the expectation. Things are not what they seem.

Quite so, says Emerson, but they are not always worse than they seem. They are often infinitely better than they seem. We are all the time entertaining angels unawares. We are dull creatures, and are slow to recognize our betters. If it is amusing to unmask a hypocrite, is it not still more amusing to discover that the commonplace individual whom we have been patronizing is really a king in disguise?

> "Seek not beyond thy cottage wall
> Redeemers that can yield thee all,
> While thou sittest at the door
> On the desert's yellow floor,

Listening to the grey-haired crones,
Saadi, see! they rise in stature
To the height of mighty Nature,
And the secret stands revealed.
Fraudulent Time in vain concealed,—
The blessed gods in servile masks
Plied for thee thy household tasks."

And when the performance does not come up to the expectation, the sudden discovery is not always unpleasant.

"The essence of all jokes, of all comedy seems to be an honest and well-intentioned half-ness, a non-performance of what is intended to be performed. The balking of the intellect, the frustrated expectation, the break of the continuity in the intellect is comedy."

Emerson was very seldom known to laugh outright, and indeed rather disliked that explosion. But he was exceedingly sensitive to "breaks in the continuity of the intellect." His mind was naturally logical. If this be so, that will follow, he argued. But he was quick-witted to see that sometimes the thing which he expected did *not*

follow. He could not help but smile at the contradiction to his logic.

"This is the radical joke of life and then of literature. The presence of the ideal of right and truth in all action makes the yawning delinquencies of practice remorseful to the conscience, tragic to the interest, but droll to the intellect."

This intellectual perception is necessary for our sanity.

"We have no deeper interest than our integrity, and that we should be aware by joke and by stroke of any lie we entertain. Besides, a perception of the comic seems a balance wheel in our metaphysical structure. It appears to be an essential element in a fine character. Wherever the intellect is constructive it will be found. We feel the absence of it as a defect in the noblest and most oracular soul. The perception of the comic is a tie of sympathy with other men, and a protection from those perverse tendencies and gloomy insanities in which fine intellects sometimes lose

themselves. A rogue alive to the ludicrous is still convertible. If that sense is lost, his fellow men can do little for him."

The rogue who can laugh at himself may be converted. But the sentimentalist who takes himself too seriously is in an unsalvable condition.

"Society is infested by persons who, seeing that the sentiments please, counterfeit the expression of them. These we call sentimentalists—talkers who mistake the description for the thing, saying for having. They have, they tell us, an intense love of nature; poetry; O they adore poetry and roses and the moon, and the cavalry regiment, and the governor; they "dear liberty;" they worship virtue—"dear virtue." Yes, they adopt whatever merit is in good repute, and almost make it hateful with their praise. The warmer their expressions, the colder we feel; we shiver with cold. A little experience acquaints us with the inconvertibility of the sentimentalist, the soul that is lost by mimicking soul. Cure the drunk-

ard, heal the insane, mollify the homicide, civilize the Pawnee, but what lessons can be devised for the debauchee of sentiment? Was ever one converted?"

It happened that Emerson attracted many of these sentimentalists and he was not unconscious of the humor of the situation.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE QUIET REVOLUTIONIST

*"The Past has baked my loaf, and in the strength of its bread I break up the old oven."*
—EMERSON'S JOURNAL.

IT is not easy for some people to understand Emerson's attitude toward the revolutionary forces that are all the time threatening the stability of society. One can appreciate the fierce energy of the revolutionist who, believing that the social structure is altogether bad, seeks to destroy it. On the other hand, there are those who look with alarm at every project that involves radical change.

But here was a quiet householder who habitually uttered the most revolutionary sentiments as if they were the most natural thoughts in the world. Of course the institutions which we see around us are not permanent. They are not the real things with which we have to do. They are

the results of what took place yesterday; they are yielding to what is taking place to-day. The only reality is the force which makes and unmakes them. Laws, customs, constitutions, churches, are the results of the revolutionary impulse in man. They are the temporary embodiments of restless thought. Everything follows thought. You think of armies, and priesthoods, and courts of justice, as necessities. Yes, they are necessities of thought. Change the thought and they change their form. The temple that seems to have grown out of the solid earth has in reality grown out of the vague aspirations of the worshipper. It grew as the tree grows, through a power of working from within. It was built as the bird builds its nest, through an instinct which was irresistible.

"Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?

Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,
And morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;
For out of Thought's interior sphere
There wonders rose to upper air."

One might watch the face of a man in the act of thinking. As one thought follows another, the mobile features change. Nerves and muscles respond to the impulses from within. The lips curve now downward, now upward, the cheeks quiver, the eyes dilate and then close, tell-tale wrinkles appear upon the forehead, the chin grows firm and then is relaxed, the pose of the head is now defiant and again it droops. The man is lost in thought, and unconscious of how he appears. To him the thought is all.

Two painters may be watching him. One is a literalist. To him the pose and features are everything. He imagines himself to be a realist, and his ambition is to portray the man as he actually

is. Now it is obviously impossible literally to put all the changing expressions on a single canvas. So what the painter does is to seize one attitude and treat it as if it were permanent. The result is something hard and unyielding. We recognize the likeness, but there is no suggestion of the possibility of a change of mood. It is not, as we say, a speaking likeness.

The other painter is a real artist. To him the features are quivering with expression, and the expression changes at every instant. He sees his subject as alive. The smile, the frown, the tense muscles all mean something. They indicate what the man is thinking about. The shape and poise of the head tell whether nature has endowed him with the capacity to have thoughts that are significant. The aim of the artist is first to get inside the man's mind and then to interpret that mind through the outward features.

If he succeeds, we say his picture is alive. The limitation of his art demands that he shall present only the attitude of a single moment, but we perceive that attitude is about to change. He is in

the act of doing something, and there is on our part a feeling of expectancy. The orator's lips are mobile, he is about to speak. The soldier's hand is on his sword, he is about to grasp it firmly and wield it with all his might. It is always the suggestion of something that is coming that marks the work of genius.

Now there are two ways of looking at human institutions,—from without or from within. We may look at laws and customs as if they were fixed and final. They are the features of a giant carved in stone. We may be idolaters of the existing order, worshipping the carved image. Or we may be iconoclasts, ready to give it a smashing blow.

But to one who seeks to look at it all from within, the institutions represent but the transitory glory of features of the Great Being. The Great Being is thinking, he is dreaming of things to come, he is planning his dwelling place upon earth. The thoughts come thick and fast, and the acts follow each after its kind.

Humanity, conceived of as a great composite

being, of which we are parts, is all alive and quivering with aspiration. It is never satisfied with the work of its own hands, and it never gives up working. Thousands of human beings are at a given time impelled by one spirit, and co-operate to one end. Their actions are not rational in the sense that each individual is able to give a reason, or least the right reason, for what he does. And yet the process, looked at as a whole, is not irrational. There is some big thought behind it all, of which all the action is expressive. Give us time and we can see the outlines of the thought.

Humanity is thinking. It is storing up experience. It is a creative force. Even what we call matinalistic progress, is itself but the following of an idea.

"And what if Trade sow cities
Like shells along the shore,
And thatch with towns the prairie broad
With railways ironed o'er?
They are but sailing foam bells
Along Thought's causing stream,
And take their shape and sun color
From him that sends the dream."

The historian tells of the Roman Empire, Feudalism, the Crusades, the French Revolution. These are tremendous facts. But the facts mean nothing till we see them as the expression of successive states of mind. Royalty as an institution is incredible to the born democrat who is without imagination, and who does not take the trouble to ask how the loyal subject feels toward his anointed king. And democracy is an empty name to one who has never felt the thrill of the idea that lies behind it.

In looking back from the vantage ground of several centuries, it is possible to see how a generation of men may be obsessed by an idea that determines all their achievements. We may see that idea lose hold upon the mind of the next generation, and lo all the mighty works lose all interest. It is as if one moment we saw the face of the Great Being all aquiver with interest. Then suddenly the light fades and he turns away from the work of his own hands.

But it is not so easy to realize that the mighty works of our own day owe their existence, and

depend for their security on the same transitory support of thought. They represent our present thinking, and when we come to think differently they will disappear.

"Ah," but we say, "we go down to hard facts. We build upon the granite of actuality, not on anything so unsubstantial as mere thought."

Emerson would answer. "You think of the granite mountain peak as unchanging. Ask the geologist to tell you what he knows about Monadnock. To him the mountain does not seem very old. Its present form is but a transitory thing. It is but a bubble upon the earth that is sailing through stars with all its history."

The poet who has learned the lesson of geology hears the mountain confess its own instability.

> "Let him heed who can and will;
> Enchantment fixed me here
> To stand the hurts of time, until
> In loftier chant I disappear.
> If thou trowest
> How the chemic eddies play,
> Pole to pole, and what they say;
> And that these gray crags

Not on crags are hung,
But beads are of a rosary
On prayer and music strung;
And, credulous, through the granite seeming,
Seest the smile of Reason beaming;—

. . .

"Knowest thou this?
O pilgrim, wandering not amiss!
Already my rocks lie light,
And soon my cone will spin."

Older than the mountain is the power from which it sprang. And that power is only interpreted by Thought.

"Monadnock is a mountain strong,
Tall and good my kind among;
But well I know, no mountain can,
Zion or Meru, measure with man.
For it is on zodiacs writ
Adamant is soft to wit:
And when the greater comes again
With my secret in his brain,
I shall pass, as glides my shadow
Daily over hill and meadow."

"When the greater comes again." That was what Emerson was always murmuring to himself. The greatness that he recognized was the greatness of thought.

He was therefore always eager to meet men who were dissatisfied with existing things and making plans for betterment. He received them hospitably, he listened sympathetically. That their schemes involved radical changes did not frighten him. It seemed to be in the order of nature.

But he always applied the same test. It was not enough that their proposal should be for something different. It must also be something greater, and the greater includes the less. When the greater thought comes, it shall make us understand and appreciate the good that already exists. It will make universal what is now partial. The "song of Human progress" he expresses in the song of nature.

> "I wrote the past in characters
> Of rock and fire the scroll,
> The building of the coral sea,
> The planting of the coal.
>
> "Let war and trade and creeds and song
> Blend, ripen race on race,
> The sunburnt world a man shall breed
> Of all the zones and countless days.

"No ray is dimmed, no atom worn,
My oldest force is good as new,
And the fresh rose on yonder thorn
Gives back the bending heavens in dew."

Notice the way in which the view of nature and the hopes for human nature are blended. Out of a few ancient elements, nature is continually making new and amazing combinations. Nothing is destroyed, everything is transformed. The same conservation of energy he discerns in humanity. The elements of character are old as the race, but no one can prophesy what new perfection can be obtained from them.

One may see Emerson's thought best by contrasting it with that of a poet whose mind turned toward the same subject. Wordsworth and Emerson both loved to personify nature, and in communion with nature they found refreshment of spirit. But Emerson, who was not accustomed to use terms of disparagement, sometimes spoke more harshly of Wordsworth than of any other modern English poet.

The fact was that the two men looked at nature

with quite different eyes. To Wordsworth, nature was the arch conservative. Over against the vain commotion of humankind was the great brooding presence of a power that could be relied upon because it was ever the same. And after his first fever of revolutionary ardor, Wordsworth returned to nature as to a refuge from all innovations. Here was the calm of an established order, and the more nearly human institutions conformed to this stability, the better for them.

To Emerson, nature was not the symbol of what is unchanging; it was eager, flashing, evanescent, infinitely suggestive. It was never the same. When it seemed the same it was only because our eyes are so dull that we can not catch all the transitions.

And that which helps us in our contact with the natural world is not its soothing lullabys. It is the challenge which comes to join in the quick and rude play of the forces which are creating and recreating the world. Come out-of-doors, the voice cries, and know what it is to live.

" 'Bookworm, leave thy sloth urbane,
A greater spirit bids thee forth
Than the gray dreams that thee detain.
Mark how the climbing Oreads
Beckon thee to their arcades,
Youth, for a moment free as they,
Teach thy feet to feel the ground
Ere yet arrives the wintry day
When Time thy feet has bound.
Take the bounty of thy birth
Taste the Lordship of the earth.'

"I heard, and I obeyed,—
Assured that he who made the claim
Well known, but loving not a name,
Was not to be gainsaid."

Nature does not rebuke our impatience when we break up old forms in order to make better. She is our accomplice, and conspires with us. We misrepresent her when we try to imitate her. Only in some stroke of originality do we accept her challenge. To see only repetition in nature is not to see at all.

"Alas, thine is the bankruptcy,
Blessed nature so to see.

"Behind thee leave thy merchandise,
Thy churches and thy charities,
And leave thy peacock wit behind.
Enough for thee the primal mind
That flows in streams, that breathes in wind.
Leave all thy pedant lore apart;
God hid the whole world in thy heart.
Love shuns the sage, the child it crowns,
Gives all to them who all renounce.
The rain comes when the wind calls,
The river knows the way to the sea,
Without a pilot it runs and falls,
Blessing all lands with its charity.
The sea tosses and foams to find
Its way up to the cloud and wind.
The shadow sits close to the flying ball,
The date fails not on the palm tree tall,
And thou,—go burn thy wormy pages,—
Shalt outsee seers and outwit sages."

That which he saw in nature he saw in every human effort that was free and spontaneous. He loved to call it the *Newness*. The Newness is that "which reconciles impossibilities, atones for shortcomings, expiates sins or makes them virtues, buries in oblivion the crowded historical past, sinks religions, philosophies, persons to legends, reverses the score of opinion of fame, reduces

science to opinion, and makes the thought of the moment the key to the universe and the egg of history to come."

"The Divine Newness. Hoe and spade, sword and pen, pictures, gardens, laws, bibles and prizes, only they were means He sometimes used. So with astronomy, music, arithmetic, castes, feudalism—we kiss with devotion these hems of His garment. We mistake them for Him, they crumble in ashes on our lips."

To the worshipper of the Divine Newness, there was nothing terrible in the voices of eager innovators, for innovation is in the order of nature, and "the good human race outlives them all, and forever in the heart abides the old sovereign sentiment requiring justice and good-will to all, and rebuilds the decayed temples, and with new names chants again the praises of Eternal Right."

"The idea which now begins to agitate society has a wider scope than our daily employments, our households and the institutions of property.

We are to revise the whole of our social structure, the state, the school, religion, marriage, trade, science, and explore their foundations in our own nature; we are to see that the world not only fitted the former men, but fits us, and to clear ourselves of every usage which has not its roots in our own mind. What is a man born for but to be a Reformer, a Re-maker of what man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good, imitating that great Nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life? Let him renounce everything which is not true to him, and put all his practices back on their first thoughts, and do nothing for which he has not the whole world for his reason. If there are inconveniences, and what is called ruin in the way, because we have so enervated and maimed ourselves, yet it would be like dying of perfumes to sink in the effort to re-attach the deeds of every day to the holy and mysterious recesses of life."

# CHAPTER XV

## MEDITATIONS ON POLITICS

*"In dealing with the State, we ought to remember that its institutions are not aboriginal, though they existed before we were born; that they are not superior to the citizen, that every one of them was the act of a single man, every law and usage was a man's expedient to meet a particular case."*

WHAT has been said of Emerson's faith in the "Divine Newness" must be taken into account when we read his essay on politics. Like the Epistles of St. Paul, it contains some things hard to be understood, "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction." I have seen an anarchistic pamphlet which was made up almost entirely of quotations from Emerson.

Indeed, on the face of it, it appears to be an argument not only against political parties, but against government in general. This is because doubt is thrown upon what we usually call the

foundations of organized society. Emerson did not believe that government had any *foundations*. He did not think of it as a building solidly resting upon a rock, and where one stone is fitted upon another. He thought of the state as a living body perpetually being renewed and having a power of motion. This organism so long as it is healthy can adapt itself to all kinds of conditions. The aim of politics is not to prevent change, but to prevent stagnation, which is death.

Before reading Emerson on Politics, read Burke's wonderful tributes to the British Constitution and diatribes on the French Revolution. To Burke the British Constitution was a stately English mansion. It was the home of ordered Liberty. Generations have worked upon this mighty edifice. It was founded by the fathers; the new generations could add to it. But let no vandal attempt to dislodge one stone. It must be preserved in all its original beauty. The institution once formed became itself the object of pious solicitude. It was not a tool to be used, but a sacred symbol of the nation's life.

Emerson did not feel that any political institution had such sanctity as that. "To the young citizen," he says, "organized society lies in rigid repose, men and institutions rooted like oak trees to the center around which all arrange themselves as best they can. But the old statesman knows that society is fluid; there are no such roots and centers, but any particle may suddenly become the center of the movement and compel the system to gyrate around it."

"That kind of government which prevails is the expression of what cultivation exists in the society which permits it. The law is only a memorandum. We are superstitious and esteem the statute somewhat. So much life as it has in the character of living men is its force."

He then considers the two objects for which governments exist—persons and property. He shows how it is the tendency of the propertied classes to get control of the government and make the laws. This is so even in a democracy. The

protection of property then becomes the business of governments rather than the welfare of persons.

"Ordinarily our parties are parties of circumstances and not of principle, as the planting interest in conflict with the commercial, parties which are identical in their moral character, and which can easily change ground with each other in many of their measures."

The conservative party may be composed of kind-hearted and excellent people, but it can never be trusted when property interests conflict with personal rights. "The conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able and cultivated part of the community, is timid and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy, it does not build, nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor establish schools, nor encourage science, nor emancipate the slave, nor befriend the poor, or the Indian, or the immigrant."

SAN MATEO COUNTY

We Americans boast of our political institutions.

"But our institutions, though in coincidence with the spirit of the age, have not any exemption from the practical defects which have discredited other forms. Every actual state is corrupt. Good men must not obey the laws too well. What satire on government can equal the severity of censure conveyed in the word 'politic,' which for ages has signified cunning, intimating that the state is a trick.

"We live in a very low state of the world and pay unwilling tribute to governments founded on force."

The essay ends with a glowing picture of a society of perfect freedom, in which reliance would be put on moral forces alone, and "the private citizen might be reasonable and a good neighbor without the hint of a jail or confiscation."

As we come to this conclusion, we say with a start, "This mild-spoken gentleman has been

saying something which sounds very much like what the revolutionary radicals have been preaching with lamentable results. He has brought us to the edge of the precipice of philosophic anarchy."

Perhaps so, but the mild-mannered gentleman is not an anarchist, and it has never entered his head to jump off the precipice. He has come to look at the view and he intends to return home by way of the turnpike.

What Emerson has been saying is that political institutions are not ends in themselves, and that it is a superstition to regard them as such. They are expedients that are always capable of improvement. The resort to physical coercion would not be necessary in a perfect society. But in the meantime, what are we to do? Emerson's common sense makes answer.

"Let not the most conservative and timid fear anything from the premature surrender of the bayonet and the system of force. For according to the order of Nature, which is quite superior

to our will, it stands thus: there will always be a government of force where men are selfish; and when they are pure enough to abjure the code of force, they will be wise enough to see how the public ends of the post-office, of the highway, of commerce, and the exchange of property, of museums, libraries, institutions of art and science can be answered."

Emerson would agree with the philosophical anarchist in saying that a society is possible in which men and women can regulate their affairs without the consciousness of any coercive governmental force. He would agree also that we ought to strive after such a free society. But when it came to the practical question as to how to attain this ideal, they would part company. The anarchist would say, "Let us abolish government, and then we shall have a community of individuals each one of whom will be a law unto himself."

Emerson would say, "I can not follow you. You put the cart before the horse. You have

fallen into the political superstition against which I have been protesting. You attribute to the *absence* of government power which the legalists attribute to governmental control. They think that law can make men virtuous; you think that the lack of it can perform the miracle. My attitude is that of Paul in regard to the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law. 'Circumcision availeth nothing, and uncircumcision but the new creature.' "

"Yes," the practical man would say, "that is all very well, but how are you going to get the new creature? If we had better men, wise, temperate, just, tolerant, we should not need so many laws; but how are we to produce such personalities?"

At this point, the philosophy of the twentieth century would take issue with the liberalism of the nineteenth century. We have more faith in the power of institutions than had Emerson and his contemporaries. We are trying the experiment of free government under much more difficult conditions. The study of the social sciences

has made us emphasize cooperation. May not society through wise laws and well-conceived institutions direct its own destinies?

To which Emerson would answer: "Yes, if society is composed of enough wise and self-reliant individuals. But social progress depends on individual progress. A man must be able to stand alone before he is able to cooperate to any advantage."

His faith in the destiny of America was founded on the belief that the people were better than their politics. There was a power there to be invoked in time of need. We are as yet only incompletely organized, but the power is there. Little by little there will be created institutions that will more adequately represent the aspirations of multitudes of private persons.

"When I look at the constellations of cities which animate and illustrate the land, and see how little the government has to do with their daily life, how self-helped and self-directed all families are—knots of people in purely natural

societies—societies of trade, of kindred blood, of habitual hospitality, house and house, man acting on man by weight of opinion, of longer or better directed industry, the refining influence of women, the invitation which experience and permanent causes open to youth and labors—when I see how much each virtuous and gifted person, whom all men consider, lives affectionately with scores of excellent people who are not known far from home, and perhaps with great reason reckons these people his superiors in virtue and in the symmetry and force of their qualities, I see what cubic values America has, and in these a better certificate of civilization than great cities or enormous wealth."

In regard to the definite political issues of the time, Emerson's sympathies were clearly expressed. Slavery was always an abomination to him, but he was slow to identify himself with the abolitionists. Their narrowness and intolerance offended his sense of fair play, while their courage attracted him. When the issue became

one of the right to free speech, he stood squarely with them. Against the extension of slavery he protested vigorously. When the Civil War came, Emerson threw himself heartily into the side of the Union. Toward Lincoln himself his attitude was one of doubt till the proclamation of emancipation came. After that there was no one who did more to interpret the soul of Lincoln to the people.

But in one thing Emerson differed from most of the New England idealists. He did not put his trust in the respectable classes alone. He delighted in the crude strength of the people. His conception of American politics was that which Theodore Roosevelt so admirably illustrated in the generation following. It was the magnificent challenge to the reformer who was virile enough to meet all men on their own ground and overcome them there.

"A timid man," Emerson says, "listening to the alarmist in Congress and in the newspapers and observing the profligacy of party—sectional

interests urged with a fury which shuts its eyes to consequences, with a mind made up to desperate extremities, ballot in one hand and rifle in the other, might easily believe that he and his country had seen their best days and harden himself the best he can against the coming ruin."

But he believed that there were elements of strength which the timid man did not take into account. The rough and ready politician was likely to be more nearly right than the fastidious person who despairs of the republic.

"Let these rough riders,—legislators in shirt-sleeves,—Hoosier, Sucker, Wolverine, Badger,—or whatever hard head Arkansas, Oregon, or Utah sends, half orator, half assassin, to represent its wrath and cupidity at Washington,—let these drive as they may; and the disposition of territories and public lands, the necessity of balancing and keeping at bay the snarling majorities of German, Irish, and of native millions, will bestow promptness, address, and reason, at last, on our

buffalo-hunter, and authority and majesty of manners. The instinct of the people is right. Men expect from good Whigs put into offices by the respectability of the country, much less skill to deal with Mexico, Spain, Britain, or with our own malcontent members, than from some strong transgressor, like Jefferson, or Jackson, who first conquers his own government, and then uses the same genius to conquer the foreigner. The senators who dissented from Mr. Polk's Mexican war were not those who knew better, but those who, from political position, could afford it; not Webster, but Benton and Calhoun.

"These Hoosiers and Suckers are really better than the snivelling opposition. Their wrath is at least of a bold and manly cast. They see, against the unanimous declarations of the people, how much crime the people will bear; they proceed from step to step, and they have calculated but too justly upon their Excellencies, the New England governors, and upon their Honours, the New England legislators. The messages of the governors and the resolutions of the legislatures are a

proverb for expressing a sham virtuous indignation, which, in the course of events, is sure to be belied."

Wisdom is justified of her children and Emerson's political teachings bore fruit in a man of the next generation,—Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt's "strenuous life" was a popular exposition of the Emersonian doctrine. The strong man is needed in a democracy. He must understand the snarling majorities and the obstinate minorities. He must enjoy the conflict. He must play the game. But he must at the same time have a moral ideal of his own, simple and commanding. He must be not a statuesque statesman but a rough and ready idealist.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CANDID FRIEND OF ENGLAND

*"A wise traveller will naturally choose to visit the best of actual nations, and an American has more reasons than another to visit Britain."*

WHEN in 1833 Emerson first visited England, his chief interest was in a few great men whose writings had inspired him with a desire to see their faces. He met Coleridge, Wordsworth, Landor and Carlyle; but he had few opportunities to become acquainted with the English people.

In 1847 he was invited to give a course of lectures before various Mechanics' Institutes in different parts of England. This visit gave him an opportunity to compare the Englishman at home with his own countrymen. The results of his observations were embodied in a volume entitled "English Traits." This book differs from the other works of Emerson in that it follows a

distinct method. The writer gives us a picture of England and the English as he saw them in the middle years of the nineteenth century. The book gives the impressions of a philosophic traveler who was anxious to get beneath the surface and get at the secrets of power. He treats of wealth, race, literature, journalism, aristocracies, religion, education.

Emerson differs from his contemporary Americans in treating England not as "the mother country," but as a foreign country. The result of this is a detachment of mind which enables him to give judgments which are free from prejudice. The thing which impressed Emerson the most was the robustness of the people. There was a rude vigor which had not been impaired by centuries of civilization. The Englishman seemed a better animal than the American. In common sense, in practical sagacity, in the adoption of means to ends the English manifested themselves to be a masterful race.

"Their self-respect, their faith in causation,

and their realistic logic or coupling of means to ends have given them the leadership of the modern world. Montesquieu said, 'No people have true common sense but those who were born in England.' This common sense is a perception of all the conditions of our earthly existence, of laws that can be stated, and of laws that cannot be stated, or that are learned only by practice, in which allowance for friction is made. They are impious in their skepticism of theory, and in high departments they are cramped and sterile. But the unconditional surrender to facts, and the choice of means to reach their ends, are as admirable as with ants and bees.

"The bias of the nation is a passion for utility. They love the lever, the screw and pulley, the Flanders draught-horse, the waterfall, windmills, tide mills, the sea and the wind to bear their freight-ships. More than the diamond Koh-i-noor, which glitters among their crown-jewels, they prize that dull pebble which is wiser than a man, whose poles turn themselves to the poles of the world, and whose axis is parallel to the axis

of the world. Now, their toys are steam and galvanism. They are heavy at the fine arts, but adroit at the coarse; not good in jewelry or mosaics, but the best iron-masters, colliers, wood-combers, and tanners in Europe. They apply themselves to agriculture, to draining, to resisting encroachment of sea, wind, travelling sands, cold and wet subsoil; to fishery, to manufacture of indispensable staples,—salt, plumbago, leather, wool, glass, pottery and brick,—to bees and silk-worms; and by their steady combinations they succeed. A manufacturer sits down to dinner in a suit of clothes which was wool on a sheep's back at sunrise. You dine with a gentleman on venison, pheasant, quail, pigeons, poultry, mush-rooms and pineapples, all the growth of his estate. They are neat husbands for ordering all their tools pertaining to house and field. All are well kept. There is no want and no waste. They study use and fitness in their building, in the order of their dwellings and in their dress. The French-man invented the ruffle, the Englishman added the shirt. The Englishman wears a sensible coat

buttoned to the chin, of rough but solid and lasting texture. If he is a lord he dresses a little worse than a commoner. They have diffused the taste for plain substantial hats, shoes and coats through Europe. They think him the best dressed man, whose dress is so fit for his use that you cannot notice or remember to describe it."

There is a delightful chapter on English manners.

"The Englishman is very petulant and precise about his accommodation at inns and on the roads; a quiddle about his toast and his chop, and every species of convenience, and loud and pungent in his expressions of impatience at any neglect. His vivacity betrays itself at all points, in his manners, in his respiration and the inarticulate noises he makes in clearing the throat,—all significant of burly strength. He has stamina; he can take the initiative in emergencies. He has that *aplomb* which results from a good adjustment of the moral and physical nature and the obedi-

ence of all the powers to the will; as if the axes of his eyes were united to his backbone and only moved with the trunk.

"This vigour appears in the incuriosity and stony neglect, each of every other. Each man walks, eats, drinks, shaves, dresses, gesticulates, and, in every manner, acts and suffers without reference to the bystanders, in his own fashion, only careful not to interfere with them or annoy them; not that he is trained to neglect the eyes of his neighbours,—he is really occupied with his own affair, and does not think of them. Every man in this polished country consults only his convenience, as much as a solitary pioneer in Wisconsin. I know not where any personal eccentricity is so freely allowed, and no man gives himself any concern with it. An Englishman walks in a pouring rain, swinging his closed umbrella like a walking stick; wears a wig, or a shawl, or a saddle, or stands on his head, and no remark is made. And as he has been doing this for several generations it is now in the blood.

"In short, every one of these islanders is an

island himself, safe, tranquil, incommunicable. In a company of strangers you would think him deaf; his eyes never wander from his table and newspaper. He is never betrayed into any curiosity or unbecoming emotion. They have all been trained in one severe school of manners, and never put off the harness. He does not give his hand. He does not let you meet his eye. It is almost an affront to look a man in the face without being introduced. In mixed or in select companies they do not introduce persons; so that a presentation is a circumstance as valid as a contract. Introductions are sacraments. He withholds his name. At the hotel he is hardly willing to whisper it to the clerk at the book-office. If he gives you his private address on a card, it is like an avowal of friendship; and his bearing on being introduced is cold, even though he is seeking your acquaintance and is studying how he shall serve you."

In regard to America the Englishman was in those days apt to be condescending.

"The English dislike the American structure of society, whilst yet trade, mills, public education and chartism are doing what they can to create in England the same social condition. America is the paradise of the economists; is the favourable exception invariably quoted to the rules of ruin; but when he speaks directly of the Americans, the islander forgets his philosophy and remembers his disparaging anecdotes."

Emerson's criticism of the England which he saw is of interest to-day because most Englishmen would agree with it. It is a penetrating study of a period that has now passed away. From the consideration of defects he turns to the wealth and plenitude of the English nature, and the essential soundness of character.

"I feel in regard to this aged England with the possessions, honours and trophies, and also with the infirmities of a thousand years gathering around her, inevitably committed to many old customs which cannot be suddenly changed;

pressed upon by the transitions of trade, and new and all incalculable modes, fabrics, arts and competing populations,—I see her not dispirited, not weak but well remembering that she has seen dark days before; indeed with a kind of instinct that she sees rather better in a cloudy day, and that in the storm of battle and calamity she has a secret vigor and a pulse like a cannon. I see her in her old age not decrepit but young and still daring to believe in her power of endurance and expansion."

## CHAPTER XVII

### AMONG HIS BOOKS

*"I put the duty of being read invariably on the author. If he is not read, whose fault is it?"*
—EMERSON'S JOURNAL, 1854.

LIVING as he did in the midst of the New England colleges, one may wonder why Emerson did not find a place in some chair of literature. Longfellow, Lowell and Holmes were professors. Why was not Emerson sought for as a teacher of youth?

The question occurred to him more than once, but he answers it in a characteristic fashion. The reason why he was not asked, he says, was because those in authority thought he was not fitted for such a position, and he had a suspicion that they were right.

I am ready to concur in this judgment. Professor Emerson, I am sure, would have been

embarrassed by a row of students conscientiously taking notes and giving docile assent to his challenging sentences with a keen eye to the marks that were to be the reward of their attention.

Emerson's attempts to be didactic were uniformly unfortunate. He could not command his moods for any systematic exposition. He confesses that the ways of the academic scholar were always an astonishment to him. His thoughts would not "stay put." In the course of a year he managed to get through with a respectable amount of work, but it came occasionally. When he knew that he ought to write a lecture, it quickened his wits to write a poem for the *Dial,* and when the editor of the *Dial* demanded a poem, it stirred his mind to a new effort at prose composition. Having found that this method answered best for his own constitution, he became reconciled to it, but it could not be recommended by a professor to his students. Neither could his favorite method of reading, beginning at the end of the book and reading backward, with wide intervals between the acts, be recommended, al-

though it has its advantages as a method of testing. If there is a suspicion that the apples in a basket have been "deaconed," the skeptical buyer will reverse the order in which they appear. The fruit looks different bottom side up.

But the chief disability of Emerson as a formal teacher of literature takes us back to the consideration to which attention was drawn in the first chapter. His mind has its real affinity to the thinkers of antiquity, to whom books were not an object of special interest. The proper study of mankind was man and nature. The book was only the record of some fellow-student, useful as stimulating his own thought.

"It seems meritorious to read; but from every thing but history or the works of the old commanding authors I come back with the conviction that the slightest *wood thought,* the least significant native emotion of my own, is more to me."

Bibliolatry, in the wide sense of book worship, had no more uncompromising enemy. "We are

too civil to books. For a few golden sentences we will turn over and actually read a volume of four or five hundred pages."

One can imagine Emerson's intonation as he expressed his wonder that we would actually read four or five hundred pages for the sake of a golden sentence which might be concealed in them. The great art of the reader was to pass quickly over the desert place in order to linger long in the green oasis.

"The colleges, whilst they provide us with libraries, furnish no professor of books; and, I think, no chair is so much wanted. In a library we are surrounded by many hundreds of dear friends, but they are imprisoned by an enchanter in these paper and leathern boxes; and, though they know us, and have been waiting two, ten, or twenty centuries for us,—some of them,—and are eager to give us a sign, and unbosom themselves, it is the law of their limbo that they must not speak until spoken to; and as the enchanter has dressed them, like battalions of infantry, in

coat and jacket of one cut, by the thousand and ten thousand, your chance of hitting on the right one is to be computed by the arithmetical rule of Permutation and Combination,—not a choice out of three caskets, but out of half a million caskets all alike. But it happens in our experience, that in this lottery there are at least fifty or a hundred blanks to a prize. It seems, then, as if some charitable soul, after losing a great deal of time among the false books, and alighting upon a few true ones which made him happy and wise, would do a right act in naming those which have been bridges or ships to carry him safely over dark morasses and barren oceans, into the heart of sacred cities, into palaces and temples. This would be best done by those great masters of books who from time to time appear,—the Fabricii, the Seldens, Magliabechis, Scaligers, Mirandolas, Bayles, Johnsons, whose eyes sweep the whole horizon of learning. But private readers, reading purely for love of the book, would serve us by leaving each the shortest note of what he found.

"There are books; and it is practicable to read them, because they are so few. We look over with a sigh the monumental libraries of Paris, of the Vatican and the British Museum. In 1858 the number of printed books in the Imperial Library at Paris was estimated at eight hundred thousand volumes, with an annual increase of twelve thousand volumes; so that the number of printed books extant to-day may easily exceed a million. It is easy to count the number of pages which a diligent man can read in a day, and the number of years which human life in favourable circumstances allows to reading; and to demonstrate that, though he should read from dawn till dark, for sixty years, he must die in the first alcoves. But nothing can be more deceptive than this arithmetic, where none but a natural method is really pertinent. I visit occasionally the Cambridge Library, and I can seldom go there without renewing the conviction that the best of it all is already within the four walls of my study at home. The inspection of the catalogue brings me continually back to the few standard writers who

are on every private shelf; and to these it can afford only the most slight and casual additions. The crowds and centuries of books are only commentary and elucidation, echoes and weakeners of these few great voices of Time."

For the mere book worm he had little respect.

"And yet—and yet—I hesitate to denounce reading as aught inferior and mean. When visions of my books come over me, as I sit writing, when the remembrance of some poet comes, I accept it with pure joy, and quit my thinking as sad, lumbering work, and hasten to my little heaven."

There were not many authors who were admitted to his little heaven. They were so congenial to his own mind that there was no question of mine and thine. It did not matter what the subject was so that it was treated in a suggestive way. The great purpose of literature is to stimulate the faculty of thinking.

"You say, 'Your reading is irrelevant.' Yes, for you, not for me. It makes no difference what I read. If it is irrelevant, I read it deeper. I read it till it is pertinent to Nature and the hour that now passes. A good scholar will find Aristophanes and Hafiz and Rabelais full of American history."

His ambition for his own books was that they might be treated in the same fashion. "I would have my books read as I read my favorite books, not with explosion and astonishment, a marvel and a rocket, but as a friendly and agreeable influence."

In his incursions into Book-land he followed the same method, or lack of method. He read what pleased him. The best guide to such books he thought was common fame. Certain books had pleased generations of readers. This proved that they were readable.

"The best rule of reading will be a method from nature, and not a mechanical one of hours

and pages. It holds each student to a pursuit of his native aim, instead of a desultory miscellany. Let him read what is proper to him, and not waste his memory on a crowd of mediocrities. As whole nations have derived their culture from a single book,—as the Bible has been the literature as well as the religion of large portions of Europe, —as Hafiz was the eminent genius of the Persians, Confucius of the Chinese, Cervantes of the Spaniards; so, perhaps, the human mind would be a gainer if all the secondary writers were lost, —say, in England, all but Shakespeare, Milton and Bacon,—through the profounder study so drawn to those wonderful minds. With this pilot of his own genius, let the student read one, or let him read many, he will read advantageously. Doctor Johnson said: 'Whilst you stand deliberating which book your son shall read first, another boy has read both; read anything five hours a day and you will soon be learned.'

"Nature is much our friend in this matter. Nature is always clarifying her water and her wine. No filtration can be so perfect. She does

the same thing by books as by her gases and plants. There is always a selection in writers, and then a selection from the selection. All books that get fairly into the vital air of the world were written by the successful class, by the affirming and advancing class, who utter what tens of thousands feel though they cannot say."

Emerson's advice is that we should read famous books, but that we should not approach them as "classics," but with the same familiarity with which we read the daily newspaper. Plato's Socrates was not a dignified literary person. We can know him just as we know a shrewd Yankee farmer. He may be to the reader a character whose oddity delights us.

"He was plain as a Quaker in habit and speech, affected low phrases and illustrations from cocks and quails, soup-pans, and sycamore-spoons, grooms and farriers, and unnamable offices,—especially if he talked with any superfine person. He had a Franklin-like wisdom. Thus, he showed

one who was afraid to go on foot to Olympia, that it was no more than his daily walk within doors, if continuously extended would easily reach.

"Plain old uncle as he was, with his great ears, —an immense talker,—the rumour ran, that on one or two occasions, in the war with Bœotia, he had shown a determination which had covered the retreat of a troupe; and there was some story that, under cover of folly, he had, in the city government, when one day he chanced to hold a seat there, evinced a courage in opposing singly the popular voice, which had well-nigh ruined him. He is very poor, but then he is hardy as a soldier, and can live on a few olives; usually, in the strictest sense, on bread and water, except when entertained by his friends. His necessary expenses were exceedingly small, and no one else could live as he did. He wore no under garment; his upper garment was the same for summer and winter; and he went barefooted; and it is said that, to procure the pleasure, which he loves, of talking at his ease all day with the most elegant

and cultivated young men, he will now and then return to his shop and carve statues, good or bad, for sale. However that be, it is certain that he had grown to delight in nothing else than this conversation; and that, under his hypocritical pretense of knowing nothing, he attacks and brings down all the fine speakers, all the fine philosophers of Athens, whether natives, or strangers from Asia Minor and the islands. Nobody can refuse to talk with him, he is so honest, and really curious to know; a man who was willingly confuted if he did not speak the truth, and who willingly confuted others asserting what was false; and not less pleased when confuted than when confuting; for he thought not any evil happened to men of such magnitude as false opinion respecting the just and unjust. A pitiless disputant, who knows nothing, but the bounds of whose conquering intelligence no man had ever reached; whose temper was imperturbable; whose dreadful logic was always leisurely and sportive; so careless and ignorant as to disarm the wariest and draw them

in the pleasantest manner into horrible doubts and confusion. But he always knew the way out; knew it, yet would not tell it. No escape; he drives them to terrible choices by his dilemmas, and tosses the Hippiases and Gorgiases, with their grand reputations, as a boy tosses his balls. The tyrannous realist!—Meno has discoursed a thousand times at length on virtue before many companies and very well, as it appeared to him; but, at this moment, he cannot even tell what it is,—this cramp-fish of a Socrates has so bewitched him.

"This hard-headed humourist, whose strange conceits, drollery and *bonhommie* diverted the young patricians, whilst the rumour of his sayings and quibbles gets abroad every day, turns out, in the sequel, to have a probity as invincible as his logic, and to be either insane, or, at least, under cover of this play, enthusiastic in his religion."

In like manner Shakespeare is not to be thought

of in terms of mere literature. We forget the technicalities of his art. "He was a full man who liked to talk."

"Some able and appreciating critics think no criticism on Shakespeare valuable that does not rest purely on the dramatic merit; that he is falsely judged as poet and philosopher. I think as highly as these critics of his dramatic merit, but still think it secondary. He was a full man who liked to talk; a brain exhaling thoughts and images, which, seeking vent, found the drama next at hand. Had he been less we should have had to consider how well he filled his place, how good a dramatist he was,—and he is the best in the world. But it turns out that what he has to say is of that weight as to withdraw some attention from the vehicle; and he is like some saint whose history is to be rendered into all languages, into verse and prose, into songs and pictures, and cut up into proverbs, so that the occasion which gave the saint's meaning the form of a conversation, or of a prayer, or of a code of laws, is im-

material compared with the universality of its application. So it fares with the wise Shakespeare and his book of life. He wrote the airs for all our modern music; he wrote the text of modern life; the text of manners; he drew the man of England and Europe; the father of the man in America; he drew the man, and described the day, and what is done in it; he read the hearts of men and women, their probity and their second thought and wiles; the wiles of innocence, and the transitions by which virtues and vices slide into their contraries; he could divide the mother's part from the father's part in the face of the child, or draw the fine demarcations of freedom and of fate; he knew the laws of repression which make the police of nature; and all the sweets and all the terrors of human lot lay in his mind as truly but as softly as the landscape lies on the eye. And the importance of this wisdom of life sinks the form, as of Drama or Epic, out of notice. 'Tis like making a question concerning the paper on which a king's message is written.

"Shakespeare is as much out of the category of eminent authors, as he is out of the crowd."

With this conception of literature Emerson did not accept the doctrine of those realists who think that the highest praise of a literary work is that it gives an exact transcript of actual life. We all are surrounded by actuality, we do not need to have some one reproduce for us what we have every day an opportunity to see for ourselves. What the man of genius does is to allow us to become acquainted with the working of his own mind. And the reader must make sure that it is the kind of mind that is worth knowing.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## EMERSON'S HISTORIC SENSE

*"I feel time passing away as an ebbing sea. I feel the eternity of man, the identity of his thought. The Greek had, it seems, the same fellow beings as I. The sun and moon, water and fire, met his heart precisely as they meet mine. Then the vaunted distinction between Greek and English, between Classic and Romantic schools become superficial and pedantic. When a thought of Plato becomes a thought to me, when a truth that fired the soul of Pindar fires me, time is no more."*

A CRITIC has declared that Emerson was lacking in the "historic sense." By this he means that Emerson had no aptitude for historical investigation as it has been developed by modern scholars. He could never have been an historian like Lord Acton, seeking to get at the exact truth in regard to all the events of past periods of time. He was incapable of the fierce industry with which Thomas Carlyle investigated

the records of long dead Hohenzollerns. One Hohenzollern would have been enough for Emerson. He had no taste for antiquarian research.

But to say that a man is without the historic sense is like accusing him of a lack of the sense of humor. This latter accusation usually means little more than there is a difference in the taste for jokes.

Instead of saying that Emerson lacked the historic sense, it would be better to inquire as to that which was characteristic in his attitude to history. Only when we sympathize with that can we obtain any benefit from him.

There are two ways of looking at human history. One may fix his mind on the differences between one period and another, or he may be more profoundly interested in the identities which he recognizes.

In the former case, what is seen is a succession of events and personages each having its little day and passing away forever. Each is different from the other, and it is the business of the historian to note those differences. He is the stage

manager careful about the entrances and the exits of the actors, and about the way the lights are arranged for each scene. There are distinctly marked periods of time, each with its beginning, middle and end. This is one way of looking at history.

Another way is that of the philosopher who is interested primarily not in persons or events, but in the forces of which they are the temporary manifestations. He perceives not so much the differences as the identities. This was Emerson's habitual point of view. He did not care for the dead past. So much of it as was really dead he would decently bury. But that part of it which was alive he would incorporate into the living present and treat as of contemporary interest. It was here that Emerson's historic sense manifested itself.

In the volume called "Representative Men" Emerson illustrates his conception of History. "The search after the great men," he says, "is the dream of youth, and the most serious occupation of manhood." And yet when we have found the

great man, we find a person very much like ourselves. We agree with him, which means that he expresses thoughts that are very like our own. We are conscious of the fact that he reveals what is in us as well as in him. Plato, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Napoleon, were representative men. There were millions of persons who had the same qualities, but in less degree. The fact that they have been appreciated proves their kinship to the multitude.

"The genius of humanity is the right point of view in history. The qualities abide; the men who exhibit them have no more nor less, and pass away; the qualities remain in another brow. No experience is more familiar. Once you saw phœnixes, now they are gone; the world is not therefore disenchanted. The vessels on which you read sacred emblems turn out to be common pottery; but the sense of the picture is sacred, and you may still read them, transferred to the walls of the world. For a time our teachers serve us personally, as meters or milestones of

progress. Once they were angels of knowledge and their figures touched the sky. Then we drew near, saw their means, culture and limits and they yielded their place to other geniuses. Happy if a few names remain so high that we have not been able to read them nearer, and age and comparison have not robbed them of a ray. But at last we shall cease to look in men for completeness and shall content ourselves with their social and delegated quality. All that respects the individual is temporary and prospective like the individual himself, who is ascending out of his limits into a catholic existence. We have never come at the true and best benefit of any genius so long as we believe him an original force."

Here Emerson differed radically from his friend Carlyle. To Carlyle the hero was an original force; Luther was more than the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Cromwell and Frederick the Great were treated as if they were creatures who were unlike the Englishmen and the Prussians whom they governed. To Emerson

they were men who best represented the ideals of their countrymen.

To my mind Emerson's most brilliant bit of historical criticism is contained in his Essay on Napoleon. Many have been the descriptions of the life and character of the great Corsican adventurer. Emerson makes us see the kind of man Napoleon was. "Bonaparte was the idol of common men because he had in transcendent degree the qualities and powers of common men."

He was "a man of stone and iron, capable of sitting on horseback sixteen or seventeen hours, of going many days together without rest or food, except by snatches, and with the speed and spring of a tiger in action; a man not embarrassed by any scruples; compact, instant, selfish, prudent, and of a perception which did not suffer itself to be balked or misled by any pretences of others, or any superstition or any heat or haste of his own.

"I call Napoleon the agent or attorney of the middle classes of modern society; of the throng

who filled the markets, shops, counting houses, manufactories, ships of the modern world, aiming to be rich. He was the agitator, the destroyer of prescription, the internal improver, the liberal, the radical, the inventor of means, the opener of doors and markets, the subverter of monopoly and abuse."

Napoleon's change from the young revolutionist to the Emperor was nothing strange. "The democrat is the young conservative. The aristocrat is the democrat, ripe and gone to seed—because both parties stand on the one ground of the supreme value of property, which one endeavors to get and the other to keep. Bonaparte may be said to represent the whole history of this party, its youth and its age, yes and with poetic justice its fate in his own."

Turn from the Essay on Napoleon to that on Power. In the description of the village tavern keeper you will recognize a poor relation of the great Napoleon. There is the same combination of force and unscrupulousness.

"I knew a burly Bonaface who for many years kept a public house in one of our rural capitals. He was a knave whom the town could ill spare. He was a social vascular creature, grasping and selfish. There is no crime which he did not or could not commit. But he made good friends of the selectmen, served them with his best chop when they supped at his house, and also with his honor the Judge he was very cordial, grasping his hand. He introduced all the fiends, male and female, into the town, and united in his person the functions of bully, incendiary, swindler, bar-keeper and burglar. He girdled the trees, and cut off the horses' tails of the temperance people in the night. He led the 'rummies' and radicals in the town meeting. Meanwhile, he was civil, fat and easy in his house, and precisely the most public-spirited citizen. He was active in getting the roads repaired and planted with shade trees; he subscribed for the fountains, the gas and the telegraph, he introduced the new horse rake, the new scraper, the baby-jumper and what not that Connecticut sends to the admiring citizens."

Schoolboys dispute the question—Was the career of Napoleon Bonaparte beneficial to Europe? The same question arises in regard to the public-spirited and disreputable tavern keeper. Emerson as an historian would not attempt to give a final verdict. He would insist on having the facts on both sides presented. And then he would judge the value of the facts by their correspondence with his own experience.

"The fact narrated must correspond to something in me to be credible or intelligible. We as we read must become Greeks, Romans, Turks, priest and king, martyr and executioner, must fasten the image to some reality in our secret experience, or we shall learn nothing rightly."

One experiences history as he experiences religion. There are a few passions that are common to all men. They are the keys to all story of the past. It is mere pedantry to explain the worship and the achievements of other ages as if they were mysteries. After all they are nothing strange. We have felt the same impulses.

"How easily these old worships of Moses, of Zoroaster, of Menu, of Socrates, domesticate themselves in the mind. I cannot find any antiquity in them. They are mine as much as theirs.

"I have seen the first monks and anchorets without crossing seas or centuries. More than once some individual has appeared to me with such negligence of labour and such commanding contemplation, a haughty beneficiary, begging in the name of God, as made good to the nineteenth century Simeon the Stylite, the Thebais, and the first Capuchins.

"The priestcraft of the East and West, of the Magian, Brahmin, Druid, and Inca, is expounded in the individual's private life. The cramping influence of a hard formalist on a young child in repressing his spirits and courage, paralyzing the understanding, and that without producing indignation, but only fear and obedience, and even much sympathy with tyranny,—is a familiar fact explained to the child when he becomes a man, only by seeing that the oppressor of his youth is himself a child tyrannized over by those names

and words and forms, of whose influence he was merely the organ to the youth. The fact teaches him how Belus was worshipped, and how the Pyramids were built, better than the discovery by Champollion of the names of all the workmen and the cost of every tile. He finds Assyria and the Mounds of Cholula at his door, and himself has laid the courses.

"Again, in that protest which each considerate person makes against the superstition of his times, he repeats step for step the part of old reformers, and in the search after truth finds like them new perils to virtue. He learns again what moral vigour is needed to supply the girdle of a superstition. A great licentiousness treads on the heels of a reformation. How many times in the history of the world has the Luther of the day had to lament the decay of piety in his own household! 'Doctor,' said his wife to Martin Luther, one day, 'how is it that, whilst subject to papacy, we prayed so often and with such fervour, whilst now we pray with the utmost coldness and very seldom?'

"The advancing man discovers how deep a

property he has in literature,—in all fable as well as in all history. He finds that the poet was no odd fellow who described strange and impossible situations, but that universal man wrote by his pen a confession true for one and true for all. His own secret biography he finds in lines wonderfully intelligible to him, dotted down before he was born. One after another he comes up in his private adventures with every fable of Æsop, of Homer, of Hafiz, of Ariosto, of Chaucer, of Scott, and verifies them with his own head and hands."

# CHAPTER XIX

## PEACE AND WAR

*"I do not like to speak to the Peace Society, if so I am to restrain myself in so extreme a privilege as the use of sword and bullet. For the peace of a man who has forsworn the use of the bullet seems to me not peace, but a canting impotence; but with knife and bullet in my hands, if I from greater bravery and honor cast them aside, then I know the glory of peace."*

IN 1838 Emerson delivered a lecture on War which has furnished many excellent texts for thoroughgoing pacifists. And yet in the war for the preservation of the Union, he threw himself unreservedly into the conflict. At first sight, it might seem that under the stress of circumstances he had given up his earlier convictions.

Yet the words which I have placed at the head of this chapter were written at the time he was making his plea for universal peace. Emerson's position was practically unchanged by the events

of his time. He was a believer in peace, but it was the peace of the strong man armed. It was peace established and maintained by men who were not to be coerced. Having demonstrated that they were able to take care of themselves they could lay aside their arms and trust to moral force. His lecture was in praise of the glory of peace which he believed in the end would supersede the meretricious glories of war.

"War educates the senses, calls into action the will, perfects the physical constitution, brings men into such swift and close collision at critical moments that man measures man. On its own scale, on the virtues it lives, it endures no counterfeit, but shakes the whole society until every atom falls into the place its specific gravity assigns it. What does war, beginning from the lowest races and reaching up to man, signify? Is it not manifest that it covers a great and beneficent principle which nature has deeply at heart? What is that principle? It is self help. Nature implants with life the instinct of self help, perpetual struggle

to be, to resist opposition, to attain to freedom and the security of a permanent, self-defended being, and to each creature these objects are made so dear that it risks its life continually in the struggles for these ends."

But because war has had such uses in the past, does it follow that it must continue indefinitely?

"At a certain stage of his progress a man fights if he be of sound mind and body. At a higher stage he makes no offensive demonstration, but he is alert to repel injury and of an unconquerable heart. At a still higher he comes into the region of holiness, passion has passed from him, his war-like nature is all converted into an active medicinal principle, he sacrifices himself, and accepts with alacrity wearisome tasks of denial and charity; but being attacked he bears it and turns the other cheek, as one engaged throughout his being, no longer to the service of the individual but to the common soul of man."

There are passages in praise of non-resistance which sound very much like the words of doc-

trinaire pacifists. But it is the non-resistance of the soldier who with arms in his hand will not use them to revenge a private wrong.

"The cause of peace is not the cause of cowardice. If peace is sought to be defended or preserved for the safety of the luxurious and the timid, it is a shame and the peace will be base. War is better and the peace will be broken. If peace is to be maintained, it must be by brave men who have come up to the same height of the hero, namely the will to carry their life in their hands, and have gone a step beyond the hero and will not seek another man's life—men who by their intellectual insight or else by their moral education attained such perception of their own intrinsic worth that they do not think property or their own body a sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep."

War is barbarous, peace has possibilities of heroic achievement, but are these not circum-

stances under which the good man must fight? In 1838 Emerson answered, "A wise man will never impawn his future being and action, and decide before-hand what he shall do in a given extreme event. Nature and God will instruct him what to do."

When the extreme event came he had no hesitancy. In 1862 he wrote, "It is wonderful to see the unseasonable senility of the Peace Party through all its masks, blinding their eyes to the main feature of the war, namely its inevitableness."

Heroism is after all the same whether in peace or in war. It is the deliberate choice of the highest service possible under the circumstances. He thinks of the soldier who when war is inevitable obeys the call of duty as one who is sacrificed to make peace possible.

> "But best befriended of the God
> He who, in evil times,
> Warned by an inward voice,
> Heeds not the darkness and the dread,
> Biding by his rule and choice,
> Feeling only the fiery thread

Leading over heroic ground,
Walled with mortal terror round,
To the aim which him allures,
And the sweet heaven his deed secures.
Peril around, all else appalling,
Cannon in front and leaden rain,
Him duty through the clarion calling
To the van called not in vain.

"Stainless soldier on the walls,
Knowing this,—and knows no more,—
Whoso fights, and whoso falls,
Justice triumphs ever more."

## CHAPTER XX

### THE FORTUNES OF THE POOR

*"The whole interest of history lies in the fortunes of the poor."*

TO the present-day reader Emerson is least satisfactory when he touches upon what we call the problem of poverty. We have in mind the condition of thousands of persons who through no fault of their own are condemned to live in city slums. They are, we believe, victims of social misadjustment. They can be redeemed only by social effort.

When we hear Emerson saying that the whole interest of history lies in the fortunes of the poor, we expect to hear him say something bearing upon our problem. How does he propose to abolish poverty? We are disappointed. Poverty, he tells us, is not so bad after all. Indeed it has many advantages. Sometimes he rises into

a strain that reminds us of Saint Francis of Assisi.

We can only understand Emerson and Saint Francis when we define the terms they used. When Francis sang the praises of my lady Poverty he was not thinking of the condition of those who lived in the hideous slums of great cities. He had in mind the poverty of the Italian peasants whose fortunes he was glad to share. They were poor in this world's goods, but rich in spiritual resources. They lived in the open air, they listened to the song of birds, and they were happy in human companionship.

The poverty which Emerson praised was the poverty of the well-born New England youth. It was a life without luxury, but with endless opportunity. There was a stimulating of necessity acting upon natural ambition. The poor man's son could aspire to any station in society. The way was open to him. If he had health he was to be congratulated as one of the children of good fortune. This was a theme of which he never tired.

"The poor man's son is educated. There is many a humble house in every city, in every town, where talent and taste, and sometimes genius, dwell with poverty and labour. Who has not seen, and who can see unmoved, under a low roof, the eager, blushing boys discharging as they can their household chores, and hastening into the sitting-room to the study of to-morrow's merciless lesson, yet stealing time to read one chapter more of the novel hardly smuggled into the tolerance of father and mother,—atoning for the same by some pages of Plutarch or Goldsmith; the warm sympathy with which they kindle each other in school-yard, or in barn or woodshed, with scraps of poetry or song, with phrases of the last oration, or mimicry of the orator; the youthful criticism, on Sunday, of the sermons; the school declamation faithfully rehearsed at home, sometimes to the fatigue, sometimes to the admiration of sisters; the first solitary joys of literary vanity, when the translation or the theme has been completed, sitting alone near the top of the house; the cautious comparison of the attrac-

tive advertisement of the arrival of Macready, Booth, or Kemble, or of the discourse of a well-known speaker, with the expense of the entertainment; the affectionate delight with which they greet the return of each one after the early separations which school or business require; the foresight with which, during such absences, they hive the honey which opportunity offers, for the ear and imagination of the others; and the unrestrained glee with which they disburden themselves of their early mental treasures when the holidays bring them again together? What is the hoop that holds them staunch? It is the iron band of poverty, of necessity, of austerity, which, excluding them from the sensual enjoyments which make other boys too early old, has directed their activity in safe and right channels, and made them, despite themselves, reverers of the grand, the beautiful, and the good. Ah! short-sighted students of books, of Nature, and of man! too happy, could they know their advantages. They pine for freedom from that mild parental yoke; they sigh for fine clothes, for

rides, for the theater, and premature freedom and dissipation, which others possess. Woe to them, if their wishes were crowned! The angels that dwell with them, and are weaving laurels of life for their youthful brows, are Toil, and Want, and Truth, and Mutual Faith."

In the last fifty years there have been vast social changes. Even in America we have begun to feel the pressure of population on the means of subsistence. The young man can not obtain a farm by the simple device of going West. And yet America is still a land of opportunity. It is still "a poor man's country" even though the poor man has to be more alert than formerly in order to win success.

It is still true that inherited wealth is not necessary for the attainment of the most desirable things. One may be born poor and yet be a child of good fortune.

"In America, the necessity of clearing the forest, laying out town and street, and building every house and barn and fence, then church and

town-house, exhausted such means as the Pilgrims brought, and made the whole population poor; and the like necessity is still found in each new settlement in the Territories. These needs gave their character to the public debates in every village and state. I have been often impressed at our country town-meetings with the accumulated virility, in each village, of five or six or eight or ten men, who speak so well, and so easily handle the affairs of the town. I often hear the business of a little town (with which I am most familiar) discussed with a clearness and thoroughness, and with a generosity, too, that would have satisfied me had it been in one of the larger capitals. I am sure each one of my readers has a parallel experience. And every one knows that in every town or city is always to be found a certain number of public-spirited men, who perform, unpaid, a great amount of hard work in the interest of the churches, of schools, of public grounds, works of taste and refinement. And as in civil duties, so in social power and duties. Our gentlemen of the old school, that is, of the school of

Washington, Adams, and Hamilton, were bred after English types, and that style of breeding furnished fine examples in the last generation; but, though some of us have seen such, I doubt they are all gone. But nature is not poorer to-day. With all our haste, and slipshod ways, and flippant self-assertion, I have seen examples of new grace and power in address that honour the country. It was my fortune not long ago, with my eyes directed on this subject, to fall in with an American to be proud of. I said never was such force, good meaning, good sense, good action, combined with such domestic lovely behaviour, such modesty and persistent preference for others. Wherever he moved he was the benefactor. It is of course that he should ride well, shoot well, sail well, keep house well, administer affairs well, but he was the best talker, also, in the company; what with a perpetual practical wisdom, with an eye always to the working of the thing, what with the multitude and distinction of his facts (and one detected continually that he had a hand in everything that has been done),

and in the temperance with which he parried all offence, and opened the eyes of the person he talked with without contradicting him. Yet I said to myself, How little this man suspects, with his sympathy for men and his respect for lettered and scientific people, that he is not likely, in any company, to meet a man superior to himself. And I think this is a good country, that can bear such a creature as he is."

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE CUTTING EDGE

*"It (courage) gives the cutting edge to every profession."*

THE virtue which Emerson insisted upon as essential was courage. In the ruder contacts of life it is common enough, but it is needed equally in time of peace.

"There is a courage of the cabinet as well as a courage of the field, a courage of manners in private assemblies that enables one man to speak masterly to a hostile company whilst another man who can easily face a cannon's mouth does not open his own.

"There is the courage of the merchant in dealing with his trade, by which dangerous turns of affairs are met and prevailed over. Merchants recognize as much gallantry, well judged too, in

the conduct of a wise and upright man of business in difficult times, as soldiers in a soldier.

"There is a courage in the treatment of every art by a master in architecture, in sculpture, in painting and in poetry, cheering the mind of spectator or receiver as by true strokes of genius, which yet no wise implies the presence of physical valor in the artist. This is the courage of genius in every kind. A certain quantity of power belongs to a certain quantity of faculty. The beautiful voice in church goes sounding on, and covers up in its volume, as in a cloak, all the defects in the choir. The singers I observe all yield to it, and so the fair singer indulges her instinct, *and dares and dares because she knows she can.*"

There could not be a more perfect illustration of the kind of courage which Emerson admired than the voice of the singer directed by a sure sense of power. It does not domineer and yet it dominates.

Emerson felt that the America of his day

exhibited courage in many directions. It faced the material problems with an indomitable energy. But he felt a lack of the cutting edge in dealing with intellectual problems. The American scholars seemed to him tame-spirited. They were not sure of themselves, and were followers rather than leaders.

In his oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard in 1837, he made a bold attack on the education of the day and ended with a plea for the courage of the intellect. The scholar must develop a heroism of his own.

"In self trust are all the virtues comprehended. Free should the scholar be,—free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom—without any hindrance which does not arise from his own constitution. Brave; for fear is a thing which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance."

He does not belong to a protected class.

"If he seeks a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions,

hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye, and search its nature, inspect its origin—see the whelping of this lion—which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it and pass on superior. The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold is there only by sufferance,—by your sufferance. See it to be a lie and you have already dealt it a mortal blow."

In 1876, in an address at the University of Virginia, Emerson returns to the same theme.

"The scholar is the right hero. He is brave because he sees the omnipotence of that which inspires him. Is there only one courage and one

warfare? I cannot manage sword and rifle: can I not therefore be brave? I thought there were as many courages as men. Is an armed man the only hero? Is a man only the breach of a gun or the haft of a bowie knife? Men of thought fail in fighting down malignity, because they wear other armor than their own. Let them decline henceforward foreign methods and foreign courages. Let them do that which they *can* do. Let them fight by their strength and not by their weakness. . . .

"We have many revivals of religion. We have had once what was called a revival of Letters. I wish to see a revival of the human mind. To see men's sense of duty extend to the cherishing and use of their intellectual powers: their religion should go with their thought and hallow it."

In his celebrated address to the Cambridge Divinity School, Emerson insisted on a spiritual courage which makes of religion an independent force.

"Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone,

to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred to the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil. Friends enough you will find who will hold up to your emulation, Wesleys and Oberlins, saints and prophets. Thank God for these good men, but say, 'I also am a man.' . . .

"Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost, —cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity. Look to it first only, that fashion, custom, authority, pleasure and money are nothing to you,—are not bandages over your eyes, that you cannot see,—but live with the privilege of the immeasurable mind.

"Let us study the grand strokes of rectitude; a bold benevolence, an independence of friends, so that not the unjust wishes of those who love us shall impair our freedom, but we shall resist for truth's sake the freest flow of kindness, and appeal to sympathies far in advance; and what is the highest form in which we know this beautiful element, that it is taken for granted, that the

right, the brave, the generous step will be taken by it, and nobody thinks of commending it."

In the lines entitled "Worship" he returns to the same theme. The essence of real worship is spiritual courage. It is the "sword of the spirit," and it has a cutting edge.

"This is he, who, felled by foes,
Sprung harmless up, refreshed by blows:
He to captivity was sold,
But him no prison-bars would hold:
Though they sealed him in a rock,
Mountain chains he can unlock:
Thrown to lions for their meat,
The crouching lion kissed his feet:
Bound to the stake, no flames appalled,
But arched o'er him an honouring vault.
This is he men miscall Fate,
Threading dark ways, arriving late,
But ever coming in time to crown
The truth, and hurl wrong-doers down.
He is the oldest, and best known,
More near than aught thou call'st thy own,
Yet, greeted in another's eyes,
Disconcerts with glad surprise.
This is Jove, who, deaf to prayers,
Floods with blessings unawares.
Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line
Severing rightly his from thine,
Which is human, which divine."

## CHAPTER XXII

### TERMINUS

*"It is time to be old,*
*To take in sail:—*
*The god of bounds,*
*Who sets to seas a shore,*
*Came to me in his fatal rounds,*
*And said: 'No more!*
*No farther shoot*
*Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root,*
*Fancy departs: no more invent;*
*Contract thy firmament*
*To compass of a tent.*
*There's not enough for this and that,*
*Make thy option which of two;*
*Economize the failing river,*
*Not the less revere the Giver,*
*Leave the many and hold the few.*
*Timely wise accept the terms,*
*Soften the fall with wary foot;*
*A little while*
*Still plan and smile,*
*And, fault of novel germs,*
*Mature the unfallen fruit.*
*Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,*
*Bad husbands of their fires,*
*Who, when they gave thee breath,*
*Failed to bequeath*

*The needful sinew stark as once,*
*The Baresark marrow to thy bones,*
*But left a legacy of ebbing veins,*
*Inconstant heat and nerveless reins,—*
*Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,*
*Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.'*

*"As the bird trims her to the gale,*
*I trim myself to the storm of time,*
*I man the rudder, reef the sail,*
*Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:*
*'Lowly faithful, banish fear,*
*Right onward drive unharmed;*
*The port, well worth the cruise, is near,*
*And every wave is charmed.'"*

TO the man of action the approach of age is dreaded because it means defeat. The strong man conscious of failing powers yields to one stronger than himself because younger.

To Emerson, as a man thinking, the great weakness of age was to be found in its lack of faith in ideals. He saw old men who accepted the actual and denied the possibility of what they had not been able to achieve. They praised the past time and looked askance at the threatening future. From the timidities of age which are often mistaken for wisdom, he asked to be delivered, and his prayer was granted.

He had lived through a transition period in thought. Almost all his contemporaries, including those who were younger than himself, have left in their later utterances a record of disillusion. Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold and Tennyson were inclined to sing dirges over a beautiful age of faith which had vanished before the advance of science. James Russell Lowell, with all his sturdy Americanism yielded to the same impulse. There was an acknowledgment of spiritual defeat. It might be expressed in gallant language, but the meaning was none the less clear.

To Emerson this so-called disillusion was only another illusion. He speaks of the man "who during all his years of health has planted himself on the side of progress, but who as soon as he begins to die, checks his forward play, calls in his troops, and becomes conservative. All conservatives are such from personal defects. They can only, like invalids, act on the defensive."

One thing he resolved to do, to "obey the voice

at eve obeyed at prime." In this he was eminently successful.

Doctor Holmes speaks delicately and discriminatingly of "the decline of Emerson's working faculties." That exactly describes what happened. The working faculties gradually failed, memory became less clear, but spiritual insight and loyalty to youthful ideals remained to the last.

While yet a young man, he had written down certain resolutions by which he wished to guide his life. Seldom has any one been more consistent in following his principles.

"Thou shalt not profess that which thou dost not believe.

"Thou shalt not heed the voice of man when it agrees not with the voice of God in thine own soul.

"Thou shalt study and obey the laws of the Universe, and they will be thy fellow servants.

"Nature shall be to thee as a symbol. The

life of the soul in conscious union with the Infinite shall be for thee the only real existence.

"Teach men that each generation begins the world afresh, in perfect freedom; that the present is not the prisoner of the past, but that to-day holds captive all the yesterdays, to judge, to accept, to reject their teachings, as they are shown by its own morning sun.

"To thy fellow countrymen thou shalt preach the gospel of the New World, that here, here in America, is the home of man, that here is the promise of a new and more excellent social state than history has recorded."

As to death, he had always been unafraid. When it came at the end of his seventy-ninth year, it found him in the mood that was habitual to him. He had long ago learned the lesson.

"Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
No trace of age, no fear to die."

THE END

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